TELL US A DICKENS STORY

MORTIMER KAPHAN

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—FROM DAVID COPPERFIELD

In his usual and most kindly fashion, the pompous Wilkins Micawber, king of the big word and flowing gesture, and prince of procrastinators, advised little David that he "is expecting, momentarily, that something will undoubtedly turn up."

Tell us a
Dickens Story

BY

MORTIMER KAPHAN

AUTHOR OF "DICKENS CHILDREN'S STORIES"

Illustrated by GRACE GILKISON

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Dedicated to

THE AMERICAN DICKENS LEAGUE

FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GOOD LITERATURE

AND THE MORAL UPLIFT OF YOUTH

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Foreword

CHARLES DICKENS was one of the few men who really understood the heart of a child. His works possess for boys and girls an educational value unsurpassed by any other writer. He keenly enjoyed living with his characters, and how he believed in them! They are a great and charming company whom our fathers and grandfathers knew intimately. Do our children know them?—David Copperfield, Little Nell, Oliver Twist, The Marchioness, Tiny Tim, Pip, Sissy Jupe, Jenny Wren, and all the rest? Mortimer Kaphan in his stories has very ably portrayed the most lovable child characters of this distinguished author. The name of Charles Dickens as an incomparable portrayer of character should be perpetuated. May his memory live in the heart of every child.

DR. DANIEL A. POLING

TELL US A Dickens Story

The Castaway God Befriended

A CHAPTER FROM THE STORY OF LITTLE DAVID COPPERFIELD

From "David Copperfield"

AS the clock began to strike, a baby began to cry. David Copperfield was born.

Little David and his mother and his good old nurse, Peggotty, lived during his childhood days at "The Rookery." David did not remember his father, who died when he was a mere baby. He was an only child and the idol of his mother's heart. These three were very happy together, and little David loved to read aloud to Peggotty from his Crocodile Book while she darned stockings.

One night when David had read himself tired, he put the book aside and looking fixedly at his nurse, asked suddenly,

"Peggotty, were you ever married?"

"Lord, Master Davy!" replied Peggotty. "What's put marriage in your head!"

"But *were* you ever married, Peggotty? You are a very handsome woman, aren't you?"

"Me handsome, Davy!" said Peggotty. "Lawk, no, my dear! But what put marriage in your head?"

"I don't know," he answered, but went on asking her many more questions on the subject. Finally Peggotty became

quite confused, gave him a tight squeeze and, for some unknown reason, changed the subject.

Presently David's mother came home, and he ran to the door to meet her. She was accompanied by a tall, dark gentleman by the name of Murdstone, who often came to see her. She liked him very much, though David and Peggotty did not like him at all.

"Master Davy," said Peggotty one day, "how would you like to go along with me and visit my brother at Yarmouth? Wouldn't *that* be a treat?"

"Is your brother an agreeable man, Peggotty?" asked David.

"Oh, what an agreeable man he is!" she cried. "And there's the sea, and the boats, and the beach, and Ham to play with—"

"But we can't leave mother here alone," David interrupted.

"Oh, bless your heart!" said Peggotty, putting her arms around him. "Mother won't be alone. She's going away for a fortnight, Davy."

When David learned this, he was very anxious to go. The day of their departure soon arrived. They were to start early in the morning in the carrier's cart.

David and his mother had never before been separated, and their parting was a touching one. She kissed him again and again, with tears in her eyes. He was suddenly aware of a grateful fondness for her and for the old Rookery, which he had never left before, and he too began to cry.

When they reached Yarmouth, they found Ham, Peggotty's nephew, waiting to receive them. David was tired out with the long journey, and Ham took him on his back.

"Yon's our house, Master Davy," he said. But, though David looked around him in all directions, there was no house

in sight. All that he saw was a big barge, high and dry on the ground, with an iron funnel sticking out of it for a chimney.

"That's not it," David said, "that ship-looking thing?'

"That's it, Master Davy," returned Ham.

David was charmed with the romantic idea of living in it. It was beautifully clean inside and as tidy as could be. One thing David particularly noticed in this delightful house was the smell of fish, and his nurse explained that her brother dealt in crabs and lobsters. David loved the place very dearly, and also Em'ly, the dear little girl he found there, and Mr. Peggotty, who was so big, so good, and so kind.

Lulled through the night by the roaring of the sea, David slept peacefully in his cozy little bed, and was out early next morning in the bright sunshine with Em'ly, gathering shells on the beach.

David was very happy here with Em'ly and could not bear to think of leaving, until he thought of his mother again and of running into her dear arms.

At length David and Peggotty were on their way back to Blunderstone Rookery. When they arrived, the door was opened by a strange servant, and half laughing and half crying, David looked for his mother. She was not to be seen. Peggotty took him by the hand and led him into the kitchen.

"Oh, where is Mama? Isn't she at home? What's the matter?" he cried wonderingly.

"Nothing's the matter, bless you, Master Davy."

"Why hasn't Mother come out to the gate, and what have we come in here for?"

"Why, Master Davy," said Peggotty softly, "I have a great surprise for you. What do you think? You've got a new Pa!"

David trembled and turned white.

"Come and see him."

"I don't want to see him."

—"And your Mama," said Peggotty.

David ceased to draw back, and Peggotty took him into the parlor. There sat Mr. Murdstone by the fire, with his mother. She rose hurriedly to meet him, but Mr. Murdstone checked her, saying,

"Now, Clara, my dear, control yourself! Davy boy, how do you do?"

David shook hands with him, waited a moment, then went and kissed his mother; and as soon as he could steal away, he crept up to his bedroom and cried himself to sleep. Here his mother and Peggotty later found him, his head hidden in the bed clothes.

"Davy, my child," said his mother, "what is the matter?"

Then David felt the touch of a hand that he knew was not his mother's.

"Go downstairs, my dear," said Mr. Murdstone. "David and I will come down together."

When they were alone, he shut the door and said, "David, if I have an obstinate horse or dog to deal with, what do you think I do?"

David did not know.

"I beat him, I conquer him, if it takes all the blood he has. What is that on your face?"

"Dirt," replied David.

Mr. Murdstone knew it was the mark of tears as well as David did. But if the question had been asked twenty times, each time with twenty blows, the boy's heart would have burst before he would have told him.

—FROM DAVID COPPERFIELD

The waiter was a twinkling-eyed man, with his hair standing upright all over his head. Standing with one arm akimbo, he surveyed little David in cheery fashion as the youth partook of luncheon at the inn. Evidently the service was to David's complete satisfaction

"Now, go wash your face, sir, and come downstairs with me."

David obeyed.

From that time on, David's home life grew harder each day. He was allowed to see very little of his mother. Soon Mr. Murdstone's sister came to live with them. She was older than Mr. Murdstone, and quite as cold and severe. They both imposed restrictions on David's small pleasures. He tried hard to please them, but they continually found fault with him. They were always present when he recited his lessons to his mother. Their stares and frowns made him forget everything. One morning when David brought his books into the parlor, he saw Mr. Murdstone switching the air with his cane.

"Now, David," he said, "you must be more careful than usual to-day."

This frightened little David, so that he began badly, and went on worse.

Finally Mr. Murdstone rose and said, "David, you are a worry and a torment. You and I will go upstairs, boy."

As he led David from the room, his mother burst out crying and ran toward them, but Miss Murdstone stopped her.

Mr. Murdstone took David up to his room and there suddenly twisted the little fellow's head under his arm.

"Mr. Murdstone, sir," cried David in terror, "pray don't beat me. I have tried to learn, sir, but I can't learn while you and Miss Murdstone are by. I can't, indeed!"

"Can't you indeed, David?" he said. "We'll try that."

He beat the child cruelly with the cane. Finally David, in agony, turned and caught between his teeth the hand which held him, and bit it through.

Then Mr. Murdstone beat him again, as if he would have

beaten the child to death, and left David bleeding and crying on the floor.

David was locked in the room for five days and allowed to see no one but Miss Murdstone, who brought him food and glared at him.

On the last night of the imprisonment, David heard his name spoken in a whisper through the keyhole.

David put his own lips to the keyhole and whispered:

"Is that you, Peggotty, dear?"

"Yes, my own precious Davy. Be as soft as a mouse, or the Cat'll hear us," she answered, meaning Miss Murdstone.

"How is Mama, dear Peggotty? Is she very angry with me?" sobbed David.

"No, not very."

"What is going to be done with me, Peggotty?"

"School. Near London. To-morrow," whispered Peggotty.

"Shall I see Mama?"

"Yes," said Peggotty. "Morning."

They both kissed the keyhole, and Peggotty promised him that she would always love and take care of his mother, and would write to him. She then crept away without being seen.

The next day David parted from his mother. He climbed into the carrier's cart, and the lazy horse drew it away. David cried so hard that his pocket handkerchief was all wet and Barkis, the kind-hearted carrier, spread it upon the horse's back to dry. They had gone but a short distance when Peggotty suddenly rushed from behind the hedge and climbed into the cart. She took David into her arms and gave him a parting hug. She then brought out some paper bags of cakes, which she crammed into the little fellow's pockets, and a purse, which she put into

his hand. After a final squeeze with both arms, she jumped down and ran away.

David found in the purse three bright shillings wrapped in a bit of paper, on which was written in his mother's hand, "For Davy. With my love."

David was so overcome by this that he cried again and wiped his eyes on his sleeve. Then the good old carrier tried to cheer him, asking all about Peggotty. David offered him some cakes and Barkis was much interested in knowing whether Peggotty had made them.

He asked David if, when he wrote to Peggotty, he would say to her that "Barkis was willin' "?

David did not understand, but promised. While waiting at the inn where he was to have his dinner and take the coach for London, he wrote Peggotty this brief letter.

> "My Dear Pegotty,—I have come here safe. Barkis is willing. My love to Mamma.—Yours affectionately.
>
> "P.S.—He says he particularly wants you to know BARKIS is willing."

Having reached London, he was met by one of the schoolmasters and taken to Salem House, as the school was called. The boys were all away at their homes, for David had been sent in the holiday time as a punishment. The schoolmaster had been directed to tie on David's back a placard bearing the words, "TAKE CARE OF HIM. HE BITES."

After four weeks, the scholars began to return. They thought the placard a great joke, and teased and patted poor David, saying, "Lie down, Towzer; lie down."

Finally the head boy arrived and spoke of David's punishment as a jolly shame. "Good-night, David," he said. "I will protect and take good care of you."

"You're very kind," answered David.

At the end of the half term, David went home for the vacation. He was pleased to see the carrier again, and told him that he had given his message to Peggotty.

"Ah!" exclaimed Barkis. "There wasn't any answer. You might tell her," he went on, "that Barkis is a-waitin' for an answer."

By great good luck, Mr. and Miss Murdstone were out when David reached home. He hugged and kissed his mother, and ran over and kissed Peggotty, who showed him a new baby brother. They all were very happy together, and David told Peggotty about Barkis, and that he was waiting for an answer.

Peggotty laughed and said that he wanted to marry her.

"Don't leave me, Peggotty," exclaimed David's mother. "Stay with me. It will not be for long, perhaps. What should I ever do without you?"

"Me leave you!" cried Peggotty. "Never, never."

David in his happiness crept close to his mother's side and sat with his cheek on her shoulder. Peggotty, who sat by, darning stockings, suddenly looked up and asked,

"What's become of Davy's great-aunt?"

"Lor; good gracious, Peggotty! Do you want another visit from her?" His mother laughed.

"Oh, never! I was only wondering whatever became of her, and if she would not like Davy now."

Aunt Betsey Trotwood had come to see them when David was born, but being very disappointed that the baby was not a girl, she went off and never came again.

Except for these happy hours, David's visit home was a dismal one. Miss Murdstone kept a calendar of the holidays and checked each one with "Well, here's another day off."

David was glad when the time arrived for Mr. Barkis to come for him again.

The cart was already down the road when he heard his mother calling to him, and looking back, saw her standing alone at the garden gate, holding the baby up in her arms for him to see.

A few weeks after his return to school, David was surprised one morning to be summoned to the parlor. He found the head-master's wife with an open letter in her hand. She led him to a sofa and, sitting down beside him, said gently, "David Copperfield, I have something to tell you, my child. I have learned this morning that your dear mother is very ill."

David suddenly knew everything. No need to tell him now that his mother was dead.

He broke out with a desolate cry and felt that he was now an orphan alone in the wide world.

When he reached home he was in Peggotty's arms before he got to the door, and she led him into the house.

Mr. Murdstone took no heed of him. David found that his pretty baby brother was dead too, and lay in his mother's arms. Peggotty was his only comfort. She told him, with great tenderness, of his mother's last days, and of how she had said,

"God protect and keep my fatherless boy! Tell him that his mother, when she lay here, blessed him, not once, but a thousand times."

Shortly afterwards, Mr. Murdstone sent Peggotty, David's only friend, away.

Peggotty then married Mr. Barkis, and had a nice little house.

"Young or old, Davy dear," she said to the boy affec-

tionately, "as long as I am alive, there will always be a room here for you."

After his mother's death, David had not been allowed to return to school.

Mr. Murdstone sent him to London, to begin life in the world on his own account. He was placed in a warehouse to earn his living. Here he had to work from morning till night, with common men and boys, pasting labels on bottles. A shabby child, insufficiently fed, in a much worn little white hat with black crepe around it for his mother. But for the mercy of God he might easily have been a little robber or a little vagabond. But God had heard his mother's prayers and took care of him.

At length he wrote to Peggotty, asking her to send his aunt's address. He did not tell her how sad and hungry he always was.

Learning from Peggotty that his aunt, Miss Trotwood, lived somewhere about Dover, he made up his mind to run away and find her. He had to walk many long, weary miles, fatigued and hungry. He sold his coat to buy bread, and slept many nights under the haystacks. Though often frightened on the way by unkind people, and teased by bad boys, he kept on bravely, and finally came to Dover.

After repeated inquiries he found his aunt's house, and as he approached, he saw a lady in the garden. At the gate he paused, dirty and ragged, and said timidly,

"If you please, Aunt, I am your nephew."

"Oh, Lord bless me," said the aunt, and sat down flat in the garden path.

"I am David Copperfield," said the poor child, "and I've been very unhappy since my mother died. I've run away to you.

I walked all the way." With that he broke into a passion of crying, and his aunt jumped up and took him into the house and laid him on a sofa, exclaiming at intervals, "Mercy on us! Mercy on us!"

She called up to Mr. Dick, who came directly down; then she told him the story.

"Now here you see David Copperfield," she said. "What shall I do with him?"

Mr. Dick looked at the boy and scratched his head, "Why, if I was you," said he, "I should wash him."

"The very thing!" Aunt Betsey arranged a nice warm bath, and David, who needed it badly, found it a great comfort.

After dinner David told them the story of his sad life.

Aunt Betsey again asked, "Mr. Dick, what would you do with him now?"

"Put him to bed," said Mr. Dick.

So David, in a shirt and trousers belonging to Mr. Dick, and tied up in two or three great shawls, was taken up to a pretty room. He cuddled down in a soft white bed, praying that he might never be homeless again, and that he might never forget to be kind to the homeless.

The next morning Aunt Betsey told David that she had written to Mr. Murdstone. David was terribly frightened and asked, "Shall I be given to them?"

Shortly Mr. Murdstone and his sister came. Aunt Betsey kept David close to her while Mr. Murdstone told her that he was a bad boy with a vicious temper, whom no one could teach to be good, for he and his sister had tried. He was willing to take David back, "to deal with as I think proper."

"Will you go, David?" asked his aunt.

David begged her not to send him back with those cruel people.

"Mr. Dick," said his aunt, "what shall I do with this child?"

"Have him measured for a suit of clothes," said Mr. Dick.

Aunt Betsey put her arm around little David, and turning to the Murdstones, said angrily:

"I don't believe a word you've told me about this child. I know how you broke his mother's heart and abused her little boy."

"Good day, sir—and good-by. Good day to you, too, ma'am," she said, turning to Miss Murdstone.

When they were gone, David kissed and thanked his aunt with great heartiness.

"I have been thinking," said Aunt Betsey, "that I might call this boy Trotwood Copperfield." And she had his new clothes marked with the new name.

She and Mr. Dick grew very fond of the pretty, affectionate boy.

"We must not forget your education, Trot. How would you like to go to school?" she asked.

"Oh, very much," he said.

And the next day, David entered a splendid school at Canterbury.

At the parting Aunt Betsey said to him,

"Trot, be a credit to yourself, to me, and to Mr. Dick, and Heaven be with you. Never be mean in anything, never be false, never cruel. Avoid these three vices, Trot, and I can always be hopeful of you."

David promised that he would never forget her advice or her kindness.

He kept that promise, and grew into a prominent man.

Aunt Betsey was very proud of him, and thanked God many, many times for sending her the dear little orphan, DAVID COPPERFIELD,

Marchioness of the Cellar

THE LITTLE SERVANT GIRL WHO PLAYED MAKE-BELIEVE

From "The Old Curiosity Shop"

THE Marchioness was a poor little drudge, an underpaid small servant, in the house of Sampson Brass and his sister Sally.

The Marchioness had never known anything of the pleasures of a girl of her age. She did not know what it was to be happy, always work, work, work. She never went out or ever had a clean face. She suffered from a chronic cold in the head.

Dick Swiveller, a rather irresponsible youth, with expectations of a fortune eventually from a rich relative, acted in capacity of clerk in the law office of Mr. Brass.

One day, while sitting alone in the office amusing himself by drawing caricatures of Miss Sally, there came a rapping of knuckles at the door.

"Come in," said Dick. "Don't stand upon ceremony. Come in!"

"Why, who are you?" asked Dick, as a small face peeped in.

To which the only reply was, "Oh, please, will you come and show the lodgings?"

There never was such an old-fashioned child in her looks and manner. She must have been at work from her cradle, and

seemed as much afraid of Dick as Dick was amazed at her. She was dressed in a coarse apron and bib, which left nothing of the visible but her face and feet. She might as well have been dressed in a violin-case.

"I haven't anything to do with the lodgings," said Dick. "Tell 'em to call again."

"Oh, please, will you come and show the lodgings?" returned the girl. "It's eighteen shillings a week and us finding plate and linen. Boots and clothes is extra, and fires in winter time is eight-pence a day."

"Why don't you show 'em yourself? You seem to know all about 'em," said Dick.

"Miss Sally said I wasn't to, because people wouldn't believe the attendance was good if they saw how small I was first."

"Well, but they'll see how small you are afterwards, won't they?" asked Dick.

"Ah! But then they'll have taken 'em for a fortnight certain," replied the child with a shrewd look, "and people don't like moving when they're once settled."

"This is a queer sort of thing," muttered Dick. "What do you mean to say you are—the cook?"

"Yes, I do plain cooking," replied the child. "I'm housemaid too. I do all the work of the house."

"I suppose Brass and the dragon, Miss Sally, and I do the dirtiest part of it," thought Dick. But the girl again urged her request, and certain mysterious sounds on the passage and staircase seemed to give note of the applicant's impatience. Richard Swiveller, therefore, sticking a pen behind each ear, and carrying another in his mouth as a token of his great importance and devotion to business, hurried out to attend to the renting of rooms as a part of the duties of his clerkship.

—FROM THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

Perched jauntily on the corner of the kitchen table, Dick Swiveller eyed the little servant girl for a moment or two. "Marchioness, fare thee well, and if forever, then forever fare thee well," said Dick as he quickly disappeared.

Dick could not get the small servant out of his mind and said over and over to himself, "I wonder how they use that child and where they keep her. I don't believe she ever has anything to eat." One day when Brass was out, and Miss Sally had left the office to get her dinner, Dick opened the door a crack, and looking after her, saw her fantastic head-dress flitting down the kitchen stairs. "She's going to feed the servant," thought Dick. "Now or never."

First peeping over the handrail and allowing the head-dress to disappear in the darkness below, he groped his way down and arrived at the door of the back kitchen immediately after Miss Brass had entered, bearing in her hand a cold leg of mutton. It was a very dark and miserable place, very low, and very damp. The walls were disfigured by a thousand rents and blotches. The water was trickling out of a leaky butt, and a most wretched cat was lapping up the drops with the sickly eagerness of starvation. The grate, which was a wide one, was wound and screwed up tight, so as to hold no more than a little thin sandwich of fire. Everything was locked up, the coal cellar, the candle-box, the salt-box, the meat-safe were all padlocked. There was nothing that a beetle could have lunched upon. The small servant stood with humility in the presence of Miss Sally and hung her head.

"Are you there?" asked Miss Sally.

"Yes, ma'am," was the answer in a weak voice.

"Go further away from the leg of mutton, or you'll be picking it, I know," said Miss Sally.

The girl withdrew into a corner while Miss Brass took a key from her pocket, and opening the safe brought from it a dreary waste of cold potatoes which she placed before the small servant ordering her to sit down before it. Then taking up a

great carving-knife, made a mighty show of sharpening it upon the carving-fork.

"Do you see this?" said Miss Brass, slicing off about two two square inches of cold mutton which she held out on the point of the fork.

The small servant looked hard at it with her hungry eyes to see every shred of it, small as it was, and answered, "Yes."

"Then don't you ever go and say," retorted Miss Sally, "that you hadn't meat here. There, eat it up."

This was soon done. "Now do you want any more?" said Miss Sally.

The hungry creature answered with a faint "No." They were evidently going through an established form.

"You've been helped once to meat," said Miss Brass, summing up the facts. "You've had as much as you can eat. You're asked if you want any more, and you answer 'no.' Then don't you ever go and say you were allowanced, mind that." With these words, Miss Sally put the meat away and locked the safe, then, drawing near to the small servant, overlooked her while she finished the potatoes.

It was plain that some extraordinary grudge was working in Miss Sally's gentle breast, and that it was that which impelled her, without the smallest present cause, to rap the child with the blade of the knife, now on her hand, now on her head, and now on her back, as if she found it quite impossible to stand close to her without administering a few slight knocks. But Mr. Swiveller was not a little surprised to see the mistress, after walking slowly backwards towards the door, as if she were trying to withdraw from the room, dart suddenly forward, and falling on the small servant, give her some hard blows with her clenched hand. The victim cried, but in a subdued manner as if

she feared to raise her voice. Then Miss Brass came out to the stairs, just as Richard had safely reached the office.

As the days passed on, Dick was very much troubled about what he had seen and thought many times of the small servant.

Being left alone often in the office, and finding the time hanging heavily on his hands, he provided himself with a cribbage-board and a pack of cards and accustomed himself to play cribbage with a dummy.

One evening while playing in silence, he heard a kind of snorting at the door.

Listening, he heard a sniff, sniff, sniffing and thought at once that it must come from the small servant, who always had a cold from the damp living. Looking intently that way, he plainly distinguished an eye gleaming and glistening at the key-hole. Having now no doubt that his suspicions were correct he stole softly to the door and pounced upon her before she was aware of his approach.

"Oh, I didn't mean any harm, indeed. Upon my word, I didn't. It is so dull downstairs. Please don't tell upon me."

"Tell upon you!" said Dick. "Do you mean to say you were looking through the keyhole for company?"

"Yes, upon my word I was!" replied the small servant.

"How long have you been cooling your eye there?" asked Dick.

"Oh, ever since you first began to play them cards, and long before."

"Well—come in," said he. "Here sit down and I'll teach you to play."

"Oh! I durstn't do it," rejoined the small servant. "Miss Sally 'ud kill me if she know'd I came up here."

"Have you got a fire downstairs?" said Dick.

"A very little one," replied the small servant.

"Miss Sally couldn't kill me if she 'know'd' I went down there, so I'll go," said Richard, putting the cards into his pocket. "Why, how thin you are! What do you mean by it?"

"It ain't my fault."

"Could you eat any bread and meat?" asked Dick, taking down his hat. "Yes? Ah! I thought so. Did you ever taste beer?"

"I had a sip of it once," said the small servant.

"Here's a state of things!" cried Mr. Swiveller, raising his eyes to the ceiling. "She never tasted it! It can't be tasted in a sip. Why how old are you?"

"I don't know."

Mr. Swiveller opened his eyes very wide and appeared thoughtful for a moment. Then bidding the child mind the door until he came back, vanished straightway.

Presently he returned, in one hand a plate of bread and beef, and in the other a pot filled with some very fragrant compound, which sent forth a grateful steam. He followed the small servant into the kitchen.

"There," said Richard, putting the plate before her. "First of all, clear that off, and then you'll see what's next."

The half-starved little creature needed no second bidding and the plate was soon empty.

"Next," said Dick, handing her the steaming pot. "Take a pull at that, but moderate your transports, you know, for you're not used to it. Well, is it good?"

"Oh, isn't it?" said the small servant.

Mr. Swiveller appeared gratified beyond all expression by this reply. He then took a long drink himself, looking steadfastly at his little companion. Then after these preliminaries, he applied himself to teaching her the game of cribbage, which she

soon learned tolerably well, being both sharp-witted and cunning.

"Now," said Mr. Swiveller, putting two sixpences into a saucer, and trimming the wretched candle, "those are the stakes. If you win, you get 'em all. If I win, I get 'em. To make it seem more real and pleasant, I shall call you 'the Marchioness,' do you hear?"

The small servant nodded.

Then the Marchioness, holding her cards very tightly in both hands, considered which to play, and Mr. Swiveller, assuming the gay and fashionable air which society required, waited for her lead.

They played many rubbers. When the clock began striking ten, Dick bethought himself that he would better go before Miss Sally returned.

"With which object in view, Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller gravely, "I shall ask your ladyship's permission to retire from your presence. Marchioness, your health. You will excuse my wearing my hat, but the palace is damp, and the marble floor, is—if I may be allowed the expression, sloppy." As a precaution against this latter inconvenience, Mr. Swiveller had been sitting for some time with his feet on the hob.

"Marchioness, the Baron Sampsono Brasso and his fair sister are, you tell me, at the play?"

The Marchioness nodded.

"Ha," said Mr. Swiveller, raising his voice after the manner of a theatrical bandit. " 'Tis well, 'tis well, Marchioness. But no matter."

The small servant who was not so well acquainted with theatrical conventionalities, showed it plainly by her looks.

"Do they often go where glory waits 'em, and leave you here?"

"Oh, yes. I believe they do," returned the small servant. "Miss Sally's such a one-er for that, she is."

"Such a what?" said Dick.

"Such a one-er," returned the Marchioness.

"Is Mr. Brass a wunner?" said Dick.

"Not half what Miss Sally is, he isn't," replied the small servant shaking her head. "Bless you, he'd never do anything without her. Miss Sally keeps him in such order."

"I suppose," said Dick, "that they consult together a good deal, and talk about a great many people—about me for instance, eh, Marchioness?"

The Marchioness nodded amazingly.

"Complimentary?" asked Mr. Swiveller.

The Marchioness changed the motion of her head, which had not yet left off nodding, suddenly beginning to shake it from side to side, with a vehemence which threatened to dislocate her neck.

"Humph!" Dick muttered. "Would it be any breach of confidence, Marchioness, to relate what they say of the humble individual who has the honor to—?"

"Miss Sally says you're a funny chap," replied his friend.

"Well, Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller, "merriment is not a bad or degrading quality. Old King Cole was himself a merry old soul, says history."

"But she says," pursued his companion, "that you aren't to be trusted."

"Why really, Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller thoughtfully, "it's a popular prejudice, and yet I'm sure I don't know why; for I've been trusted in my time to a considerable amount, and I can safely say that I never forsook my trust until it deserted me. Never!"

His little friend nodded again, adding imploringly, "But don't you ever tell upon me, or I shall be beat to death."

"Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller rising, "the word of a gentleman is as good as his bond—sometimes better, as in the present case, where his bond might prove but a doubtful sort of security. I am your friend, and I hope we shall play many more rubbers together in this same salon. But Marchioness," stopping on his way to the door, and wheeling slowly round upon the small servant who was following with the candle, "it occurs to me that you must be in the constant habit of airing your eye at keyholes, to know all this."

"I only wanted," replied the trembling Marchioness, "to know where the key of the safe was hid. That was all. And I wouldn't have taken much, if I had found it—only enough to squench my hunger."

"You didn't find it, then?" asked Dick. "But, of course, you didn't or you'd be plumper. Good night, Marchioness. Fare thee well, and if forever, then forever, fare thee well. And put up the chain, Marchioness, in case of accidents."

A short time after entering into alliance with the small servant, Dick Swiveller was taken very ill. He tossed with a raging fever upon a hot, uneasy bed, for he knew not how long; and then he awoke, and with a sensation of most blissful rest, better than sleep itself, began gradually to remember something of his sufferings. Happening to raise his hand, he was astonished to find how heavy it seemed, and yet how thin and light it really was. Hearing a faint cough in the room, he raised himself a little in his bed and looked about. This made him doubt whether he had locked his door last night.

He was certainly in his own familiar room, but with astonishment he saw a number of bottles, and other furnishings of

a sick room, all very clean and neat, but all quite different from anything he had left there when he had gone to bed! The atmosphere, too, was filled with a cool smell of herbs and vinegar; the floor newly sprinkled; the—the what? The Marchioness? Yes, playing cribbage by herself at the table. There she sat intent upon her game, coughing now and then in a subdued manner as if she feared to disturb him.

"I'm dreaming," thought Richard. "That's clear. When I went to bed my hands were not made of egg-shells, and now I can almost see through 'em. This surely must be a dream."

Here the small servant had another cough. Looking around and seeing Dick awake, she jumped up quickly, and clapped her hands for joy. She began to laugh and then to cry, declaring she was so glad, she didn't know what to do.

"Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller, thoughtfully, "be pleased to draw nearer. First of all, will you have the goodness to inform me where I shall find my voice. And secondly, what has become of my flesh?"

The Marchioness only shook her head mournfully, and cried again; whereupon Mr. Swiveller, being very weak, felt his own eyes affected likewise.

"I begin to infer, from your manner and these appearances, Marchioness," said Richard after a pause, and smiling with a trembling lip, "that I have been ill."

"You just have!" replied the small servant, wiping her eyes. "And haven't you been a-talking nonsense!"

"Oh!" said Dick. "Very ill, Marchioness, have I been?"

"Dead, all but," replied the small servant. "I never thought you'd get better. Thank Heaven you have!"

Mr. Swiveller was silent for a long while. By and by he began to talk again, and asked how long he had been there.

"Three weeks to-morrow," replied the small servant, "three long, slow weeks."

The bare thought of having been in such extremity caused Richard to fall into another silence. The Marchioness, having arranged the bedclothes more comfortably and felt that his hands and forehead were quite cool, cried a little more, and then applied herself to getting tea ready and making some thin dry toast.

While she was thus engaged Mr. Swiveller looked on with a grateful heart, very much astonished to see how thoroughly at home she made herself. She propped him up with pillows and looked on with unutterable satisfaction while the patient took his poor meal with a relish which the greatest dainties of the earth might have failed to provoke. Having cleared away and disposed everything comfortably about him again, she sat down to take her own tea.

"Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller, "how's Sally? Have you seen her lately?"

"Seen her!" cried the small servant. "Bless you, I've run away."

Mr. Swiveller immediately laid himself down again, and so remained for about five minutes. He resumed his sitting posture after that length of time and inquired, "And where do you live, Marchioness?"

"Live!" cried the small servant. "Here!"

"Oh!" said Mr. Swiveller.

And with that he fell down flat again, as suddenly as if he had been shot. Thus he remained until she had finished her meal, put everything in its place and propped him up again.

"And so you have run away?" asked Dick.

"Yes," said the Marchioness, "and they've been a-tizing of me."

"Been—I beg your pardon," said Dick. "What have they been doing?"

"Been a-tizing of me—tizing you know—in the newspapers."

"Aye, aye," said Dick, "advertising."

The small servant nodded and winked.

"Tell me," said he, "how it was that you thought of coming here."

"Why, you see," returned the Marchioness, "when you was gone, I hadn't any friend at all, and I didn't know where you was to be found. But one morning, when I was—"

"Was near a keyhole?" suggested Mr. Swiveller, observing that she faltered.

"Well then," said the small servant, nodding. "When I was near the office keyhole, I heard somebody saying that she lived here, and was the lady of the house you lodged at, and that you was took very bad, and wouldn't nobody come and take care of you. Mr. Brass and Miss Sally both said it was no business of theirs, and the lady went away, and slammed the door, too, when she went out, I can tell you. So I run away that night and come here, and told 'em you was my brother, and they believed me, and I've been here ever since."

"This poor little Marchioness has been wearing herself to death," cried Dick.

"No, I haven't," she returned. "Not a bit of it. Don't you mind about me. I like sitting up, and I've often had a sleep, bless you, in one of them chairs. But if you could have seen how you tried to jump out o' window, and if you could have heard how you used to keep on singing and making speeches, you

wouldn't have believed it. I'm so glad you're better, Mr. Liverer."

"Liverer, indeed," said Dick. "It's well that I am a liverer. I strongly suspect I should have died, Marchioness, but for you."

At this point Mr. Swiveller took the small servant's hand in his again, struggling to express his thanks, but she quickly changed the theme, making him lie down and urging him to keep quiet.

"Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller, "if you'll do me the favor to retire for a few minutes and see what sort of a night it is, I'll get up."

"Oh, you mustn't think of such a thing," protested his nurse.

"I must indeed," said the patient. "Whereabout are my clothes?"

"Oh, I'm so glad. You haven't got any," replied the Marchioness as Dick fell back upon his pillow.

"I am afraid," moaned Richard, "that you're right. I suppose there's nothing left—not so much as a waistcoat even?"

"No, nothing," said the Marchioness. She started to go, closed the door slowly and peeped into the room again, to make sure that he was comfortable.

"It's embarrassing," said Mr. Swiveller. "In case of fire even an umbrella would be something. But you did quite right, dear Marchioness. I know I should have died without you!"

In time Dick recovered fully, and shortly after found to his surprise that he had inherited money from his aunt. Sobbing and laughing at the same time in his happiness, he exclaimed, "Please God, we'll make a scholar of the poor Marchioness yet."

He bought her a lot of new dresses and sent her to school.

After casting about for a name which should be worthy of her, he decided in favor of Sophronia Sphynx, as being euphonious and genteel, and furthermore indicative of mystery.

At the age of nineteen she had grown into a good-looking, clever young woman.

One day when he went to visit her at the boarding school, she came down to him alone, looking more beautiful and more fresh than ever. Then it occurred to him, but not for the first time, that if she would marry him, how comfortable they might be. When Richard asked her, whatever she said, it wasn't *no*.

In her new rôle as mistress of Dick's cheery cottage the little creature found at last greater happiness than she had ever known, but to Dick Swiveller she always remained his dear LITTLE MARCHIONESS.

An Unwilling Thief

THE STORY OF THE LITTLE BOY WHO ASKED FOR MORE

From "Oliver Twist"

IN a dreary country workhouse in England, a weakly little baby boy was born. Just about the time he was able to open his eyes, his poor mother closed hers, too ill and too sad to tell any one her name. Nobody knew who she was.

The child, thus brought into the world, was as friendless and lonely as his mother. As no one came to claim him, the little foundling was entrusted and left to the none too tender mercies of the parish orphanage to be provided for as a nameless orphan.

"And now about business," said Mr. Bumble, the beadle of the orphanage, who named the foundlings in alphabetical order. "The last was S—Swubble, I named him. This was a T—and I called him Twist. I have got names made to the end of the alphabet."

And so, poor little Oliver, for that was his "first" name, was brought up with a number of unfortunate children without fathers or mothers.

Oliver Twist's ninth birthday found him a pale, thin child, diminutive in stature, and decidedly small for his age, but possessed of a good sturdy spirit in spite of all the cruel treatment he received.

The room in which he and the other boys of the orphanage were fed, was a large stone hall, at one end of which was a large copper pot, out of which the master ladled the gruel at meal times. Of this each boy had one porringer, *and no more* —except on occasions of great public rejoicing, when he was given two ounces and a quarter of bread besides. The bowls in which the food was served never wanted washing. The boys polished them with their spoons till they shone again, and would then sit staring at the copper with eager eyes as if they could have devoured it, meanwhile sucking their fingers with a view of catching up any stray splashes of gruel.

Oliver Twist and his companions suffered the tortures of slow starvation, until they became so wild with hunger that one boy, who was tall for his age, declared that unless he had another bowl of gruel every day, he would eat the boy who slept next to him. The boys believed him. A council was held; lots were cast to decide who should walk up to the master after supper that evening, and ask for more,—and it fell to Oliver.

The evening arrived; the boys took their places. The gruel was served as usual and disappeared. The boys whispered to each other and winked at Oliver. With fear in his heart, Oliver rose from the table, and advanced to the master, basin and spoon in hand.

"Please, sir, I want some more."

The master turned very pale as he gazed in astonishment at Oliver. "What!" he said in a faint voice.

"Please, sir," replied Oliver, "I want some more."

The master aimed a blow at Oliver's head with the ladle, pinioned him under his arms, and shrieked aloud for the beadle. Mr. Bumble rushed in, and hearing the enormity of Oliver's crime, dragged him before the board and addressing the chair-

—FROM OLIVER TWIST

Little Oliver Twist, chosen as spokesman by his schoolmates, with fear in his heart, advanced to the master, basin and spoon in hand. "Please, sir, may I have some more?" he gently inquired. A heavy scowl greeted his humble request.

man, said, "I beg your pardon, sir! Oliver Twist has asked for more!"

There was a general start. "For more!" exclaimed the chairman. "Compose yourself, Bumble, and answer me distinctly. Do I understand that he asked for more, after he had eaten the supper allotted to him?"

"He did, sir," replied Bumble.

"That boy will be hung," said the gentleman. "I know that boy will be hung." Oliver was then ordered into instant confinement, and a bill was next morning pasted on the outside of the gate, offering a reward of five pounds to anybody who would take Oliver Twist off the hands of the parish.

In a short time a chimney-sweep who was in need of the reward, but whose reputation for cruelty was well known, applied for Oliver.

The boy was taken before a magistrate, who fortunately for him was a kindly man. After asking some questions, which Mr. Bumble took great care that Oliver should answer properly, the absent-minded magistrate reached for his pen to sign the paper which would have consigned Oliver to the brutal chimney-sweep. The ink, not being just where he expected to find it, caused the magistrate to stop and look about him. As his eyes fell upon Oliver's terrified face, the old gentleman laid down his pen, and looked from Oliver to Mr. Bumble. "My, boy," he said, leaning over the desk, "you look pale and alarmed. What is the matter? Stand a little away from him, Beadle," said the magistrate. "Now, boy, tell me what's the matter; don't be afraid."

Oliver fell on his knees, and begged that they would order him back to the dark room—that they would starve him and

beat him rather than send him away with that dreadful chimney-sweep.

The magistrate refused to sign the papers and ordered them to take the boy back to the workhouse and to treat him kindly. "He seems to want it."

After that the master and the board of the workhouse tried to send the boy to sea, and one day when Mr. Bumble had gone out to make arrangements, he happened to meet an undertaker named Sowerberry, who wanted a boy. They came to terms and Oliver was apprenticed to the undertaker.

When he was taken to his new home, the undertaker's wife was amazed to see a boy so small and called him "little bag o' bones." She gave him a plate of scraps which had been put aside for the dog, and told him that he must sleep under the counter.

There was also another apprentice, the undertaker's assistant, Noah Claypole, a boy older and larger than Oliver, who took delight in tormenting him. Finally one day he spoke unkindly of Oliver's mother and the little fellow sprang on him and pounded him with his fists.

Oliver was dragged into the cellar and locked up. "Run to Mr. Bumble, Noah," said Mrs. Sowerberry, "and tell him to come here directly and not to lose a minute. Make haste."

Noah ran along the streets at his swiftest pace, until he reached the workhouse.

"Oh, Mr. Bumble!—Mr. Bumble, Mr. Bumble—Oliver, sir—Oliver has—"

"What? What? Not run away! he hasn't run away, has he, Noah?"

"No, sir, no. Not run away, sir, but he's turned vicious."

Mr. Bumble and Noah betook themselves with all speed

to the undertaker's shop. The accounts of his ferocity, as related by Mrs. Sowerberry, were of so startling a nature, that Mr. Bumble judged it prudent to parley, before opening the door. He gave a kick at the outside, then applying his mouth to the keyhole, said in a deep and impressive tone.

"Oliver!"

"Come, you let me out!" replied Oliver, from the inside.

"Do you know this here voice, Oliver?" said Mr. Bumble.

"Yes," replied Oliver.

"Ain't you afraid of it, sir? Ain't you a-trembling while I speak, sir?" said Mr. Bumble.

"No," replied Oliver boldly.

"Oh, you know, Mr. Bumble, he must be mad," said Mrs. Sowerberry, "to venture to speak so to you."

"It's not madness, ma'am," replied the beadle. "It's meat."

"What?" exclaimed Mrs. Sowerberry.

"Meat, ma'am, meat. You've overfed him, ma'am. You've raised an artificial soul and spirit in him, ma'am, unbecoming a person of his condition—if you had kept the boy on gruel, this would never have happened.". He unlocked the cellar door and dragged Oliver out by the collar.

For the rest of the day Oliver was shut up in the back kitchen, and at night ordered upstairs to his dismal bed in the shop.

With the first ray of light, Oliver arose and unbarred the door. One timid look around—one moment's pause of hesitation—he had closed it behind him, and was in the open street.

By eight o'clock he had walked many miles, and sat down to rest by the side of a milestone, which in large figures told him that London was just seventy miles from that spot. Oliver thought London was the very place for a homeless boy, and

after resting a little while, he jumped up and again walked forward. He walked twenty miles that day, tasted nothing but a crust of dry bread, and at night crept under a hayrick. Being very tired, he soon fell asleep and forgot his troubles.

For a whole week Oliver tramped on, begging for food to keep him from starvation, and very early on the seventh morning he limped into the little town of Barnet, just outside of London. As he sat down on a cold doorstep to take a little rest, the figure of a boy crossed over the street and spoke to him.

"Hullo, my covey, what's the row?"

He was one of the queerest looking boys that Oliver had ever seen,—snub-nosed, flat-browed, common-faced, and as dirty a juvenile as one would wish to see. He was about his own age but had all the airs and manners of a man. He wore a man's coat, which reached nearly to his heels and his hat was stuck on the top of his head.

"Hull, my covey, what's the row?" asked this strange young fellow again to Oliver.

"I am very hungry and tired," replied Oliver, the tears standing in his eyes. "I have walked a long way."

"Going to London?" said the strange boy.

"Yes."

"Got any lodgings?"

"No."

"Money?"

"No."

The strange boy whistled, and put his hands in his pockets.

"Do you live in London?" inquired Oliver.

"Yes, I do, when I'm at home," replied the boy. "I suppose you want some place to sleep to-night, don't you?"

"I do indeed," answered Oliver. "I have not slept under a roof since I left the country."

"Don't fret your eyelids on that score," said the young gentleman. "I got to be in London to-night; and I know a 'spectable old gentleman as lives there, wot'll give you lodgings for nothink."

The offer of shelter was too tempting to be resisted, so Oliver trudged off with his new friend. It was late when they reached London. Oliver learned on their journey that his companion's name was Jack Dawkins, but to his intimate friends he was better known as "The Artful Dodger."

At length they reached the door of a house, which Jack entered, drawing Oliver up some dark stairs and into a dirty room,—the walls and ceiling were perfectly black with age and dirt,—where they found a very old, shriveled Jew, with a quantity of matted red hair. Several rough beds, made of old sacks, were huddled side by side on the floor, and seated round the table were four or five boys, none older than the Dodger. They all crowded about their associate as he whispered a few words to the old man, and then they turned round and grinned at Oliver.

"This is him, Fagin," said Jack Dawkins; "my friend Oliver Twist."

Fagin grinned, and making a low bow took Oliver by the hand.

"We are very glad to see you, Oliver—very," he said. "Dodger, take off the sausages, and draw a tub near the fire for Oliver. Ah, you're a-staring at the pocket-handkerchiefs, eh, my dear! There are a good many of 'em, ain't there? We've just looked 'em out, ready for the wash, that's all, Oliver; that's all. Ha! ha! ha!" The latter part of this speech was hailed by a

boisterous shout from the boys who, Oliver found, were all pupils of the merry old gentleman.

Then they all went to supper. Oliver ate his share, and was given a glass with something to drink. Immediately afterwards, he felt himself gently lifted on to one of the sacks; and then he sank into a deep sleep.

It was late next morning when Oliver awoke. There was no one in the room but the old man, who was boiling some coffee in a saucepan for breakfast, and whistling softly to himself as he stirred it. He would stop every now and then to listen when there was the least noise below, and, when he had satisfied himself, he would go on, whistling and stirring again, as before.

When the coffee was done, the old man drew the saucepan to the hob; then he turned round and looked at Oliver, and called him by his name. Oliver, interested in the peculiar actions of the old man, did not answer, but pretended to be asleep. Fagin stepped gently to the door, which he fastened. He then drew forth from a trap in the floor a small box, which he placed carefully on the table. His eyes glistened as he raised the lid, and looked in. Dragging an old chair to the table, he sat down, and took from it some magnificent pieces of jewelry.

At length the bright dark eyes of Fagin, which had been staring vacantly before him, fell on Oliver's face; the boy's eyes were fixed on his in mute curiosity. Instantaneously he closed the lid of the box with a loud crash, and started up furiously.

"What's that?" said Fagin. "What do you watch me for? Why are you awake? What have you seen? Speak out, boy! Quick—quick!"

"I wasn't able to sleep any longer, sir," replied Oliver meekly. "I am very sorry if I have disturbed you, sir."

"You were not awake an hour ago?" Fagin scowled fiercely at the boy.

"No—no, indeed!" replied Oliver.

"Are you sure?" cried Fagin, with a still fiercer look than before.

"Upon my word I was not, sir," replied Oliver earnestly. "I was not, indeed, sir."

"Tush, tush, my dear!" said Fagin, resuming his old manner. "I was merely joking; of course I know that, my dear, I only tried to frighten you. You're a brave boy. Ha! ha! You're a brave boy, Oliver!"

Oliver got up, walked across the room to wash himself, and stooped for an instant to raise the pitcher. When he turned his head, the box was gone.

Presently the Dodger returned with his young friend Charley Bates. The four sat down to breakfast on coffee and some hot rolls and ham, which the Dodger had brought home in the crown of his hat.

"Well," said Fagin, glancing shyly at Oliver, and addressing himself to the Dodger, "I hope you've been at work this morning, my dears?"

"Hard," replied the Dodger.

"As nails," added Charley Bates.

"Good boys, good boys!" said Fagin.

"What have you got, Dodger?"

"A couple of pocketbooks," replied the young gentleman.

"Lined?" inquired Fagin, with eagerness.

"Pretty well," replied the Dodger, producing two pocketbooks.

"And what have you got, my dear?" said Fagin to Charley Bates.

"Wipes," replied Master Bates, at the same time producing four pocket-handkerchiefs.

"Well," said the old man, inspecting them closely, "they're very good ones—very. You haven't marked them well, though, Charley, so the marks shall be picked out with a needle and we'll teach Oliver how to do it. Shall us, Oliver, eh—Ha! ha! ha!"

"If you please, sir," said Oliver.

"You'd like to be able to make pocket-handkerchiefs as easy as Charley Bates, wouldn't you, my dear?" said Fagin.

"Very much indeed, if you'll teach me, sir," replied Oliver.

Master Bates saw something so exquisitely ludicrous in this reply, that he burst into a fit of laughing which sent the coffee he was drinking down the wrong channel, very nearly suffocating him.

"He is so jolly green!" said Charley when he recovered.

When the breakfast was cleared away, the merry old gentleman and the two boys played at a very curious game,—Fagin placing a snuff-box in one pocket of his trousers, a note-case in the other, and a watch in his waistcoat pocket; with a guard-chain round his neck, and sticking a mock diamond pin in his shirt, he buttoned his coat tight round him, and putting his spectacle-case and handkerchief in his pockets, trotted up and down the room with a stick, in imitation of the manner in which old gentlemen walk about the streets. He would look constantly round him, as if in fear of thieves, and keep slapping all his pockets in turn, to see that he hadn't lost anything, in such a very funny and natural manner that Oliver laughed till the tears ran down his face. All this time, the two boys followed him closely about. At last, the Dodger trod upon his toes, while Charley Bates accidentally stumbled up against him from behind, and in

that one moment they took from him, with the most extraordinary rapidity, the snuff-box, note-case, watch-guard, chain, shirt-pin, pocket-handkerchief, and even the spectacle-case. If the old gentleman felt a hand in any one of his pockets, he cried out where it was, and then the game began all over again.

When this game had been played a great many times, a couple of young women called, one of whom was named Bet, and the other Nancy. Oliver thought them very nice girls indeed, but discovered later that they were also pupils of Fagin.

They stopped a long time and then finally went away with the Dodger and Charley, leaving Oliver alone with Fagin, who began again pacing up and down the room.

"Is my handkerchief hanging out of my pocket, my dear?"

"Yes, sir," said Oliver.

"See if you can take it out, without my feeling it, as you saw them do, when we were at play this morning."

Oliver held up the bottom of the pocket with one hand, as he had seen the Dodger hold it, and drew the handkerchief lightly out of it with the other.

"Is it gone?" cried Fagin.

"Here it is, sir," said Oliver, showing it in his hand.

"You're a clever boy, my dear." The playful old gentleman patted Oliver on the head approvingly. "Here's a shilling for you. If you go on, in this way, you'll be the greatest man of the time. And now come here, and I'll show you how to take the marks out of the handkerchiefs."

Oliver wondered what picking the old gentleman's pocket in play had to do with his chances of being a great man. But, thinking that Fagin, being so much his senior, must know best, he followed him quietly to the table, and was soon deeply involved in his new study.

For many days Oliver remained in Fagin's room, picking the marks out of the pocket-handkerchiefs, and sometimes taking part in the game already described.

At length, one morning, Oliver obtained permission to go out under the guardianship of Charley Bates, and his friend the Dodger.

The three boys sallied out, the Dodger with his coat-sleeves tucked up, and his hat cocked, as usual. Master Bates sauntered along with his hands in his pockets, and Oliver walked between them. They were just emerging from a narrow court when the Dodger made a sudden stop, and, laying his finger on his lips, drew his companions back.

"What's the matter?" demanded Oliver.

"Hush!" replied the Dodger, "do you see that old cove at the book-stall?"

"Yes," said Oliver.

"He'll do," said the Dodger.

"A prime plant," observed Master Charley Bates.

Oliver looked from one to the other, with the greatest surprise, when suddenly the two boys walked stealthily across the road, and slunk close behind the old gentleman, who stood there, reading a book, which he had taken up from the stall. What was Oliver's horror as he stood there, a few paces off, and saw the Dodger plunge his hand into the old gentleman's pocket and draw out a handkerchief! To see him hand it to Charley Bates, and to behold them both running away at full speed! In an instant the whole mystery of the handkerchiefs, the curious game and the old man, rushed upon the boy's mind; then, confused and frightened, he took to his heels.

At the very moment when Oliver began to run, the old gentleman, putting his hand in his pocket, and missing his hand-

kerchief, turned sharply round. Seeing the boy scudding away at such a rapid pace, he concluded him to be the depredator, and, shouting "Stop thief!" with all his might, made off after Oliver, book in hand. The Dodger and Master Bates, unwilling to attract public attention by running down the open street, had merely retired into the very first doorway round the corner. They no sooner heard the cry, and saw Oliver running, than they issued forth, and shouting "Stop thief! Stop thief!" joined in the pursuit like other good citizens.

"Stop thief!" The cry was taken up by a hundred voices, and the crowd accumulated at every turning. Away they ran, pell-mell, helter-skelter, slap-dash, tearing, yelling, screaming, knocking down the pedestrians as they turned the corners, splashing through the mud, and rattling along the pavements. They followed on his track, and gained upon the poor wretched, breathless child, panting with exhaustion. Stopped at last! A clever blow! He is down upon the pavement, covered with mud and dust, looking wildly round upon the heap of faces that surround him.

"Is this the boy, sir?" asked the officer.

"Yes," said the gentleman, "I am afraid that is the boy. Poor fellow. He has hurt himself."

The police officer then seized Oliver by the collar, and dragged him, half fainting to the station house, where he was searched, but nothing was found upon him. He was then taken before the magistrate, who sentenced him to three months at hard labor. The officer was about to carry the insensible boy to his cell, when an elderly man rushed in.

"Stop, stop!" he cried. "Don't take him away! I saw it all; I keep the book-stall. I saw three boys loitering on the opposite side of the way, when this gentleman was reading.

The robbery was committed by another boy, I saw it done, and I saw that this boy was perfectly amazed and stupefied by it." Having by this time recovered a little breath, the worthy book-stall keeper proceeded to relate, in a more coherent manner, the exact circumstances of the robbery.

Oliver Twist was then discharged and carried off, still white and faint, to the home of the kind old gentleman, Mr. Brownlow, who felt responsible for the boy's unfortunate condition.

After Charley Bates had seen Oliver dragged away by the police officer, he came to a halt and burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter, and flung himself upon a doorstep.

"What's the matter?" inquired his companion, the Dodger.

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Charley Bates.

"Hold your noise," cried the Dodger, looking cautiously round, "do you want to be grabbed, stupid?"

"I can't help it," said Charley. "I can't help it! To see him splitting away at that pace, and cutting round the corners, and knocking up against the posts, as if he was made of iron as well as them." He again rolled upon the doorstep, and laughed louder than before.

"What'll Fagin say?" inquired the Dodger.

This startled Master Bates, as both boys were in great fear of old Fagin.

When they arrived at the den, Fagin saw that only two boys instead of three had returned. When the Dodger told what happened to Oliver, the old man was livid with rage, both because of the loss of his promising pupil, and because of the fear that Oliver might tell all he saw.

After a consultation it was agreed that Nancy was to go to the police station to find out what had been done with Oliver,

who, she was to pretend, was her "dear little lost brother."

Meanwhile Oliver became desperately ill with a burning fever, unconscious of his new surroundings. Shortly, however, he was able to sit in an easy-chair, propped up with pillows, and was being tenderly nursed by Mrs. Bedwin, Mr. Brownlow's motherly old housekeeper. During this time, Oliver was very happy,—oh, so happy and peaceful. These were the only happy days he had ever known; everybody was so kind and gentle with him.

In the room hung a picture of a beautiful lady, and when Mr. Brownlow glanced from Oliver to the portrait he saw every feature was the same.

Soon Oliver grew very strong and quite recovered. Mr. Brownlow bought him a new suit, a new cap and a new pair of shoes.

While Mr. Brownlow sat reading one evening in his study, as Oliver entered all dressed in his brand new clothes, he pushed the book away from him and told Oliver to come near the table and sit down. "I'm going to speak to you, my boy, of your future."

Poor little Oliver turned pale with fright, and exclaimed, "Oh, don't tell me you are going to send me away, sir, pray! Let me stay here, and be a servant, anything. Only don't send me back to the wretched place I came from."

"My dear child," said the old gentleman touched by Oliver's appeal, "you need not be afraid of my deserting you, unless you give me cause."

"I never, never shall, sir," said the child.

Mr. Brownlow then asked Oliver to tell him the story of his whole life.

As Oliver began and was just relating about his orphan

days, an old friend of Mr. Brownlow, a Mr. Grimwig, entered. He was a very peculiar and eccentric stout old man, who took great delight in showing his distrust of Oliver.

"I'll answer for that boy's truth with my life!" said Mr. Brownlow, knocking the table.

"And I for his falsehood with my head!" rejoined Mr. Grimwig, knocking the table also.

"We shall see," said one. "We will," said the other with a provoking smile. "We will."

As fate would have it, Mrs. Bedwin brought in, at this moment, a small parcel of books, which Mr. Brownlow had that morning purchased of the identical book-stall-keeper that befriended Oliver.

"Did you return the other books and money that is due?" asked Mr. Brownlow.

"No, sir, the boy did not stop," said the nurse.

"Dear me, I am very sorry for that," exclaimed Mr. Brownlow. "I particularly wished him to have the books and the money. He is a poor man, and they are not paid for."

"Send Oliver with them," said Mr. Grimwig, with an ironical smile, "he will be sure to deliver them safely, you know."

"Yes, do let me take them, if you please, sir," said Oliver. "I'll run all the way, sir."

Mr. Brownlow was just about to refuse to let Oliver go, when Mr. Grimwig's malicious cough made him change his mind.

"You *shall* go, my dear; the books are on a chair by my table. You are to say," said Mr. Brownlow, glancing steadily at Grimwig, "you are to say that you have brought those books back, and that you have come to pay the money I owe him. This is a five-pound note, so you will have to bring me back the change."

"I won't be ten minutes, sir," replied Oliver, as he left the room. Mrs. Bedwin followed him to the door.

"Bless his sweet face!" said the old lady, looking after him. "I can't bear, somehow, to let him go out of my sight."

Mr. Brownlow, pulling out his watch, said, "he'll be back in twenty minutes," while Mr. Grimwig asserted that the boy would never be back.

"He has a new suit of clothes on his back, a set of valuable books under his arms, and a five-pound note in his pocket. He'll join his old friends the thieves, and laugh at you. If ever that boy returns to this house, sir, I'll eat my head."

With these words, he drew his chair closer to the table, and there the two friends silently sat, with the watch between them. It grew very dark, and still the two old gentlemen sat, but Oliver did not come back.

Meanwhile Oliver had walked along on his way to the book-stall, thinking how happy and contented he ought to feel, when he was startled by a young woman screaming out very loud, "Oh, my dear brother!" and then he was stopped by a pair of arms thrown tight round his neck.

"Don't," cried the child, struggling. "Let go of me; who is it? What are you stopping me for?"

"Oh, my gracious!" said the young woman. "I've found him! Oh! Oliver! Oliver! Oh, you naughty boy, to make me suffer sich distress on your account! Come home, dear, come!" With these exclamations, the young woman burst into a fit of crying.

"Why, it's Nancy!" exclaimed Oliver, who now saw her face, for the first time.

"You see, he knows me!" cried Nancy, appealing to the

bystanders. "Make him come home, or he'll kill his dear mother and father, and break my heart!"

Suddenly Bill Sikes, another of the gang, a very brutal man, came to Nancy's rescue, and seeing that Oliver still hesitated, tore the books from his arms, and growled:

"Do you hear, go home with your sister!" Oliver saw, plainly, that resistance would be of no avail. He held out his hand, which Nancy clasped tight in hers.

They walked on, through little-frequented and dirty streets, until at last they came to a ruinous old house, on a filthy narrow street, which they entered. There they found Fagin, the Artful Dodger, and Charley Bates. Immediately his new clothes, money and books were taken from him.

For a week or so, Oliver was kept locked up and seldom left alone. He was constantly with Charley Bates and the Dodger, who played the old game with Fagin every day. At times, the old man would amuse the boys, telling them stories of robberies he had committed in his younger days, at which Oliver could not help laughing heartily, in spite of all his better feelings.

In short, the wily old man had the boy in his toils, and hoped to instill into his soul the poison which would blacken it forever.

One morning at breakfast, Oliver was told by Fagin that he was to be taken on a trip by Mr. Bill Sikes.

The next day after tramping many miles, Bill Sikes and Oliver found themselves far into the country, but still they kept on walking in mud and darkness, until they came to a dilapidated house, where they were met by another man, whom Bill called Toby Crackit.

After walking about a quarter of a mile further, they stopped before a detached house surrounded by a wall, to the

top of which Toby Crackit, scarcely pausing to take breath, climbed in a twinkling.

"The boy next," said Toby. "Hoist him up; I'll catch hold of him."

Before Oliver had time to look round, Sikes had caught him under the arms, and he and Toby were lying on the grass on the other side; Sikes followed, and they stole toward the house.

Now, for the first time Oliver realized that robbery, if not murder, was the object of the expedition.

"Oh! for God's sake let me go!" cried Oliver, sinking upon his knees.

"Get up!" murmured Sikes, trembling with rage. "Get up, or I will grind your brains to dust."

"Here, Bill, wrench the shutter and window open, large enough to admit a boy of Oliver's size."

"Now listen, you young limb," whispered Sikes, drawing a dark lantern from his pocket, and throwing the glare full on Oliver's face. "I'm a-going to put you through there. Take this light, go softly up the steps straight afore you and unfasten the street door, and let us in."

Oliver, more dead than alive, gasped out, "Yes."

"It's done in a minute," said Sikes. "Directly I leave go of you, do you work. Hark!"

"What's that?" whispered the other man.

"Nothing," said Sikes, releasing his hold of Oliver. "Now!"

In the short time he had to collect his senses Oliver had resolved that, whether he died in the attempt or not, he would make one effort to dart upstairs and alarm the family. Filled with this idea, he advanced at once, but stealthily.

"Come back!" suddenly cried Sikes aloud. *"Back! Back!"*

Scared by the sudden breaking of the dead stillness, Oliver let his lantern fall and knew not whether to advance or fly.

The cry was repeated—a light appeared—a vision of two terrified half-dressed men at the top of the stairs swam before his eyes—a flash—a loud noise—a smoke—a crash somewhere, and he staggered back.

Sikes had disappeared for an instant, but he was up again, and had Oliver by the collar before the smoke had cleared away, and dragged the boy up.

"Clasp your arm tighter," said Sikes as he drew him through the window. "Give me a shawl here. They've hit him. Quick! How the boy bleeds."

Then came the loud ringing of a bell, mingled with the noise of fire-arms, and the shouts of men. Then the noises grew confused in the distance, and Oliver saw or heard no more, for he had fainted. Sikes after carrying him on his back for some distance, dropped the boy into a ditch and fled.

There he lay for some time. When Oliver awoke and regained his senses, he crept back to the house where the robbery was attempted, and told his sad story. Mrs. Maybe, the owner of the house, believed the boy's story, and immediately put him to bed, for he appeared to be ill. She cared for him tenderly and when he was well again and had sufficiently recovered, he told her the entire story of his orphan days and of his life with Fagin, and with tears in his eyes, said, "I'm only just a little boy, be kind to me."

Mrs. Maybe kissed the child and assured him that his troubles were now at an end, and in the future she and her niece, Miss Rose, would care for him.

And so the months rolled by,—these were happy days indeed. Oliver had but one other desire and that was to again see

the kind old gentleman Mr. Brownlow and the good nurse Mrs. Bedwin and tell them of the great change in his life.

Miss Rose promised to take Oliver to see Mr. Brownlow which she did the very next day. Oliver waited in the coach while she went into the house alone, and told the kind old gentleman the entire story of how Oliver had been kidnapped, and of all his sufferings. The kind gentleman was pleased beyond words. "This is great happiness to me," he said, "great happiness! But why did you not bring him with you?"

"He is waiting in the coach at the door," replied Rose.

"At the door!" cried the old gentleman, with which he hurried out of the room, down the stairs, up the coach-steps, and into the coach without another word. He threw both his arms around the child and kissed him again and again.

"There is somebody else who should not be forgotten, whose heart will rejoice at the sight of Oliver," said Mr. Brownlow, ringing the bell. "Send Mrs. Bedwin here at once."

The old housekeeper answered the summons with all despatch, and dropping a curtsy at the door, waited for orders.

"Why, you get blinder every day, Bedwin," said Mr. Brownlow, rather testily.

"Well, that I do, sir," replied the old lady. "People's eyes at my time of life, don't improve with age, sir."

"I could have told you that," rejoined Mr. Brownlow, "but put on your glasses, and see if you can't find out what you were wanted for, will you?"

The old lady began to rummage in her pocket for her spectacles. But Oliver's patience was not proof against this new trial, and yielding to his first impulse, he sprang into her arms.

"God be good to me!" cried the old lady, embracing him. "It is my innocent boy!"

"My dear old nurse!" cried Oliver.

"He would come back—I knew he would," said the old lady, holding him in her arms. "How well he looks, and how like a gentleman's son he is dressed again! Where have you been this long, long while? Ah! the same sweet face, but not so pale, the same soft eye, but not so sad. I have never forgotten them or his quiet smile, but have seen them every day, side by side with those of my own dear children, dead and gone since I was a lightsome young creature." Running on thus, and now holding Oliver from her to mark how he had grown, now clasping him to her and passing her fingers fondly through his hair, the good soul laughed and wept upon his neck by turns.

The benefactor and unfailing friend of Oliver Twist eventually adopted the child as his own son.

It was later discovered that the portrait of the lady in Mr. Brownlow's house which so resembled Oliver was the picture of his mother, who died when he was a baby.

From day to day Mr. Brownlow became attached to him more and more, and by his kindness taught him that the greatest lesson in life is love.

But to his dying day, Oliver never forgot that day at the work house when he asked "Please, sir, I want some more."

An Angel From Heaven

LITTLE NELL, THE ORPHAN, WHO TOOK CARE OF HER GRANDFATHER

From "The Old Curiosity Shop"

TUCKED away in an obscure corner in smoky old London stood a queer old-fashioned building which was known as "The Old Curiosity Shop."

There lived here a delicate, gentle, little girl, with bright brown hair, who was loved by every one and was called Little Nell.

Nell was an orphan child and lived with her grandfather, a feeble little old man with long gray hair. But so tenderly had she been brought up and loved by the old man that she scarcely felt the loss of her mother, who had died when she was a baby. Her life was a happy one. She helped her grandfather in the shop and kept house for him in the rooms above it.

But in time a sad change came over the cheerful little home which had sheltered them for many years. For some reason which Nell could not understand, her grandfather became silent and moody. He began to go away from the house at night, leaving her alone until early morning. The brave child was not afraid, but she was lonely and troubled. She grieved at the change which had come over the old man. When he left her at night she would sit sometimes for hours at the window, watching and praying

that God would guard and protect her dear grandfather. Slowly the lights of the neighborhood would go out, one by one.

Finally the child learned, to her sorrow, what all this meant.

Her grandfather, hoping to make a fortune for her, had been gambling the long nights through. He had borrowed money from a hard creditor who was eagerly watching for an opportunity to seize everything that the old man owned in payment of the debt.

Worn out by disappointment and grief, the grandfather fell ill. Day after day and night after night patient little Nell would sit beside his pillow, often with her small hand clasped in his.

At length the old man recovered somewhat from his illness, but his mind was weakened, and he seemed more a child than the little girl.

Then one day he said, "Nell, we must go forth from here. We must wander together through the wide, wide world, friendless and homeless. Let us speak softly, Nell; for if they knew of our purpose, they would take you from me. We must not stop here another day. I am ruined, and—worse, far worse than that—I have ruined you for whom I ventured all. If we are beggars—"

"What if we are?" asked the child. "Let us be beggars and be happy."

"Beggars, and happy?" said the old man. "Poor child!"

"Yes. Yes, rather than live here now," the child repeated, more earnestly than before. "If you are sorrowful, let me comfort you. Have no fear, Grandfather." She put her arm around his neck. "I am sure we shall be happy and have enough. I shall beg for both of us. Let us walk through country places, and sleep in fields under trees, and never think of money again, or

—FROM THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

A sudden change came over little Nell as they went forth from the Old Curiosity Shop which had sheltered them for many years. "Have no fear, Grandfather," she said, "I shall beg for both of us." Slowly they departed, innocent youth and helpless age.

anything that can make you sad." The child's voice was lost in sobs. Nor did she weep alone.

With the early dawn of a beautiful June morning, they departed. Forth from the city while it yet slumbered went the two poor adventurers, wandering they knew not where. Innocent youth and helpless age, hand in hand, hearts devoted to each other!

They walked all day and slept that night at a small cottage where beds were let to travelers. Next morning they were afoot again. It was late in the afternoon when, drawing near to a cluster of laborers' huts, the child looked wistfully in each, doubtful where to ask permission to rest a while and buy a draught of milk. At length she timidly stopped at one where there was an old man sitting in a cushioned chair beside the hearth. She thought perhaps he was a grandfather and would feel kindly towards her own.

"God save you, master," said the old cottager in a thin piping voice. "Are you traveling far?"

"Yes, sir, a long way," replied the child. "From London."

"From London?" said he. "I have been in London many a time. Sit thee down, master, in the elbow chair," said the old man, and striking his stick sharply on the floor, summoned some one to minister to the travelers. The good woman of the house, who had observed that Nell was limping, made the child take off her shoe, and with a gentle hand dressed the poor little blistered foot.

After leaving the cottage, the two had not proceeded far when they were overtaken by a man driving an empty cart. He stopped them, saying that the people in the cottage they had just left had asked him to look out for them. He kindly gave them a lift in his cart, as he was going their way.

This was a great relief, for the travelers were very much fatigued. Nell had scarcely settled herself on a little heap of straw in one corner when she fell asleep.

She was awakened by the stopping of the cart, which was about to turn up a by-lane. The driver got down to help her out, and pointing to some trees at a very short distance before them, said that the town lay there, and that they had better take the path which they would see leading through the churchyard. Accordingly, towards this spot they directed their weary steps.

When they entered the churchyard, they turned aside from the path to walk among the graves on the soft earth, which was very pleasant to their tired feet. Passing behind the church, they came upon two traveling showmen, who had their Punch and Judy show spread on the ground and were trying to mend dolls' clothes for their figures without needle or thread. Little Nell saw the worried look on their faces, and timidly approaching, asked:

"Will you let me try to mend them for you? I have needle and thread in my basket and will be glad to help you."

The men accepted her offer and Nell, kneeling down, was soon busily engaged in her task, which was quickly accomplished.

In appreciation of her helpfulness they directed the grandfather to a place where the two might find lodging for the night. Being bound for the races the next day, they told the old man that it might be well for him to come along with them.

He gladly accepted the invitation, and Nell busied herself gathering wild flowers which she arranged in tiny bunches, hoping to sell some of them to the ladies at the races.

During the course of the next day, Nell overheard in the conversation of their new friends that they suspected the

strangers of being runaways. She was greatly worried for fear the men might try to return them in order to receive a reward. She told her grandfather, and that night, when all was still, they crept away.

After a long day's travel they reached a small village and paused before a cottage hidden away among trees. Nell had been attracted by a sign over the door which bore the word "SCHOOL" in black letters on a white board.

They found the schoolmaster sitting alone on his tiny porch. Nell dropped a curtsy and told him they were poor travelers who sought a shelter for the night, which they would gladly pay for, as far as their means allowed. The schoolmaster looked earnestly at her as she spoke, and with a kind smile, arose. He was immediately attracted to the child, for there was something about her that reminded him greatly of a favorite pupil he once had had.

"You have been walking a long way," said the schoolmaster.

"A long way, sir," the child replied.

"You're a very young traveler, my child," he said, laying his hand gently on her head. Then, turning to the old man, he said: "Your grandchild, friend?"

"Aye, sir," cried the old man. "And the stay and comfort of my life."

"Come in," said the schoolmaster.

He conducted them into his little schoolroom, which was the parlor and kitchen likewise, and told them they were welcome to remain under his roof till morning. Before they had done thanking him, he spread a coarse white cloth upon the table, with knives and platters, and bringing out some bread and cold meat, asked them to eat.

He made them rest there for two days before going further.

Nell was very happy. She busied herself tidying up the tiny cottage school and helped the kind schoolmaster with his household duties.

When they were ready to leave, the schoolmaster walked with them to the gate. Little Nell, with trembling hand, held out to him the money which the lady had given her for her flowers at the races. She faltered in her thanks as she thought how small the sum was, blushing as she offered it.

But with a smile he bade her put it away, and stooping down to kiss her cheek, said:

"Good fortune and happiness go with you! and God bless and guard you both; and if you ever pass this way again, don't forget the little village school or the old schoolmaster."

"We shall never forget the little school, sir, nor ever forget to be grateful to you for your kindness to us."

Nell, with thankfulness in her heart, threw her little arms around his neck and bade him farewell. And they turned away, walking slowly and often looking back, until they could see him no more.

The afternoon had worn away into a beautiful evening. On they went, until they arrived at a smart little house on wheels, with white curtains, shutters of green picked out with panels of red, making a brilliant effect. In front sat a stout, comfortable lady, taking tea. The tea things were set upon a drum, covered with a white napkin.

She was in the act of raising her cup to her lips when she noticed the old man and young girl walking slowly by, glancing at her with eyes of modest but hungry admiration.

"Hey!" cried the lady of the caravan, scooping the crumbs

out of her lap and swallowing them before wiping her lips. "Come back and have some tea." Nell, seeing kindness in her countenance, returned to ask her how far it was to the next town. She told her that eight miles still lay before them.

Nell could scarcely repress her tears when she learned that the town was eight miles away, and then the lady of the caravan called to her again.

"Come nearer, nearer still," said she, beckoning to her to ascend the steps. "Are you hungry, child?"

"Not very, but we are tired, and it's—it *is* a long way."

"Well, hungry or not, you had better have some tea," rejoined her new acquaintance. "I suppose you're agreeable to that, old gentleman."

The grandfather humbly pulled off his hat and thanked her, and then, with Nell sitting on the grass, they ate a hearty meal.

The child thanked her and made a curtsy. She helped with great readiness to put away the tea things. Then Nell and her delighted grandfather followed the lady into the rolling house, for a ride.

Their patroness then shut the door and away they went, with a great noise of flapping and creaking and straining, the bright brass knocker knocking one perpetual double knock of its own accord as they jolted heavily along.

When they had traveled slowly for a short distance, Nell looked round the caravan, observing it more closely. One half of it was carpeted, and so partitioned off as to accommodate a sleeping-place which was constructed after the fashion of a berth on board ship. The other half served for a kitchen, and was fitted up with a stove, the small chimney of which passed

through the roof. It held also a closet or larder and a few cooking utensils, hanging upon the walls.

"Well, child," said the stout woman, "how do you like this way of traveling?"

Nell replied that she thought it was very pleasant indeed. The lady of the caravan sat looking at the child for a long time in silence, and then getting up, brought out from a corner a large roll of canvas about a yard in width, which she laid upon the floor and spread open with her foot until it nearly reached from one end of the caravan to the other.

"There, child," she said, "read that."

Nell walked down it and read aloud the enormous black letters, "JARLEY'S WAX-WORK."

"Read it again," said the lady, complacently.

"Jarley's Wax-Work," repeated Nell.

"That's me," said the lady. "I am Mrs. Jarley."

The lady of the caravan unfolded another scroll whereon was the inscription, "One Hundred Figures, The Full Size of Life"; and then another scroll on which was written, "The Most Stupendous Collection of Real Wax-Work in the World"; and then several smaller scrolls with such inscriptions as "Now Exhibiting Within—The Genuine and Only Jarley"—"Jarley Is the Delight of the Nobility and Gentry"—"The Royal Family Are Patrons of Jarley." When the lady had exhibited these announcements to the astonished child, she brought forth hand-bills, some of which were couched in the form of parodies of popular songs, as "Believe Me If All Jarley's Wax-Work So Rare"—"I Saw Thy Show in Youthful Prime" and "Over the Water to Jarley"; while others were composed with a view to the light and more facetious spirits, including a parody of the favorite, "If I Had a Donkey," which began,

If I known'd a donkey wot wouldn't go
To see Mrs. Jarley's wax-work show,
Do you think I'd acknowledge him?
Oh, no, no!
Then run to Jarley's—

Then many compositions in prose, all having the same moral, namely, that the reader must make haste to Jarley's, and that children and servants were admitted at half-price.

When she had brought all these testimonials of her important position in society to bear upon her young companion, Mrs. Jarley rolled them up, and having put them carefully away, she sat down again, looking at the child in triumph.

"I never before saw any wax-work, ma'am," said Nell. "Is it funnier than Punch and Judy?"

"Funnier!" exclaimed Mrs. Jarley in a shrill voice. "It is not funny at all. It's calm and—what's that word again—critical? No—classical. That's it. It's calm and classical. No low beating and knocking about, no jokings and squeakings like a Punch and Judy show, but always the same, with a constantly unchanging air of coldness and gentility, and so like life that if the wax figures only spoke and walked about, you'd hardly know the difference."

"Is it here, ma'am?" asked Nell, whose curiosity was awakened by this description.

"Is what here, child?"

"The wax-work, ma'am."

"Why, bless you, child, what are you thinking of? How could such a collection be here? It's gone on in the other vans to the village where it'll be exhibited the day after to-morrow. You are going to the same town and you'll see it, I dare say. I doubt if you could stay away, if you was to try ever so much."

"I shall not be in town, I think, ma'am," said the child.

"Not there!" cried Mrs. Jarley. "Then where will you be?"

"I—I—don't quite know. I am not certain."

"You don't mean to say that you're traveling about the country without knowing where you are going? What curious people you are," said the lady of the caravan.

"We are poor people, ma'am," returned Nell, confusedly. "We have nothing to do. I wish we had."

"You amaze me more and more," said Mrs. Jarley. "Why, what do you call yourselves? Not beggars?"

"Indeed, ma'am, I don't know what else we are," returned the child.

"Lord bless me, I never heard of such a thing. Who'd have thought it!" said she, as he relapsed into a thoughtful silence and remained in that state so long that Nell withdrew to the other window and rejoined her grandfather, who was now awake.

At length Mrs. Jarley beckoned Nell to approach. "And the old gentleman, too," said she, "for I want to have a word with him. Do you want a good situation for your granddaughter, master? If you do, I can put her in the way of getting one. What do you say?"

"I can't leave her," answered the old man. "We can't separate. What would become of me without her?"

"I should have thought you were old enough to take care of yourself, if you ever will be," retorted Mrs. Jarley, sharply.

"But he never will be," said the child in an earnest whisper. "I fear he never will be again. Pray, do not speak harshly to him. We are very thankful to you," she added aloud, "but neither of us could part from the other, if all the wealth of the world were halved between us."

"Well," said Mrs. Jarley, addressing the grandfather

again, "for such love as that you two should never be separated. You might help dust the figures and take the checks. What I want your granddaughter for, is to point 'em out to the company. It's not a common offer, bear in mind," she continued, her voice rising to the tone and manner in which she was accustomed to address her audiences. "It's Jarley's Wax-Work, remember. The duty is very light and genteel, the company particular and select." Mrs. Jarley remarked that with reference to pay, she could pledge herself to no specific sum until she had tested Nell's abilities. But she bound herself to provide both board and lodging for her and her grandfather.

"We are very much obliged to you, ma'am," said Nell, "and thankfully accept your offer."

"And you'll never be sorry for it," cried Mrs. Jarley. "I'm pretty sure of that. Now that it's all settled, let us have a bit of supper."

The next morning the show was arranged. Nell pointed out the wax figures to the visitors, and it was not long before her innocent ways gained her many friends. While occupied in this pleasant manner she would have been very happy, were it not that her grandfather's mind was failing more and more every day.

One evening, a holiday night with them, Nell and her grandfather went out to walk, the weather being warm. They had strolled a long distance when suddenly large drops of rain began to fall, and, as the storm clouds came sailing onward, there were low rumblings of distant thunder, and terrific flashes of lightning.

Fearful of taking shelter beneath a tree, the old man and child hurried to a near-by inn, in the hall of which some men were playing cards.

"Nell, they're—they're playing cards," whispered the old man, greatly excited, as he heard the money clink upon the table. He imagined himself again gambling to win a fortune for his little girl. He begged her to give him the money earned at the wax-work show, which she did. Then, with a greedy desire, he joined the gamblers.

The child sat by and watched the progress of the game with a troubled mind, regardless of the run of luck and mindful only of the desperate passion which held her grandfather. Losses and gains were to her alike.

In a few hours the old man had lost all. Nell's little purse was empty. She laid her hand upon his shoulder, telling him it was past midnight.

The storm had raged for full three hours. Being so late, it seemed advisable to spend the night at the inn, and Nell, taking her grandfather aside, told him that she had still the piece of gold sewn in her dress, which would pay for their lodgings. The child was greatly disturbed, and her sleep was troubled by fitful dreams.

Suddenly she woke with a start, in terror. In the darkness she saw a figure that crouched and slunk along, stealing round her bed. She had no voice to cry for help, no power to move, but lay still, watching the robber busy about her garments, taking the little money she had left. When he departed, she was dreadfully afraid. Her one thought now was to reach her grandfather, where she would be safe. Stealing softly out of bed, she saw, between the flashes of the lightning, that the person who had robbed her was her own grandfather. Creeping back to bed, she spent the rest of the night in tears.

In the morning they started for the caravan. The child thought her grandfather rather avoided her eye and appeared

to expect that she would tell him of her loss. She felt she must do that, or he might suspect the truth.

"Grandfather," she said, after they had walked about a mile in silence, "do you think they are honest people at the house yonder? I lost some money last night—stolen from my bedroom, I am sure."

"But is there no more, Nell?" asked the old man. "No more anywhere? Was it all taken? Was there nothing left?"

"Nothing," replied the child.

"We must get more," said the old man. "We must earn it, Nell, hoard it up, scrape it together, come by it somehow. Never mind this loss. Tell nobody of it, and perhaps we may regain it. Don't ask how. We may regain it and a great deal more. But tell nobody or trouble may come of it. And so they took it out of your room while you were asleep?" he added in a compassionate tone, very different from the secret, cunning way in which he had spoken until now. "My poor Nell, poor little Nell!"

The child hung her head and wept.

"Let me persuade you, then, oh, do let me persuade you, dear Grandfather, to think no more of gains or losses, and to try no fortune but the fortune we pursue together."

"She speaks the truth," murmured the old man. "She speaks the truth." Then he kissed her cheek and walked on.

A short time afterwards, when Nell was out one afternoon picking wild flowers, she came upon a gypsy camp. And there, to her surprise, seated by the fire, talking earnestly with two rough men, she saw her own grandfather. It flashed through her mind that she had seen these men before, and suddenly she recognized them as the men with whom her grandfather had played cards at the inn on the night of the storm. Nell crept

as close as she could without being seen, and stood behind the shrubbery, listening intently. She was horrified to hear these three working out the details of a plan by which her grandfather was to rob Mrs. Jarley, their benefactress, of her cash-box—in the hope of retrieving his losses by further gambling.

"God be merciful to us," cried the child to herself, "and help us in this trying hour! What shall I do to save him!"

She fled homeward as quickly as she could, and threw herself upon her bed, distracted.

The first idea that flashed in her mind was flight, instant flight. Then she remembered that the crime was not to be committed until the next night, and there was time for thinking and resolving what to do.

Then the horrible fear came to her that her grandfather might rob her good friend at any moment. She stole to the room where the money was, opened the door, and looked in. God be praised: he was not there, and Mrs. Jarley was sleeping soundly.

She went back to her own room but could not sleep, besieged as she was by such terrors. Half undressed, she flew to the old man's bedside and roused him from his sleep.

"What's this!" he cried, starting up in bed and fixing his eyes on little Nell.

"Grandfather, I have had a dreadful dream," said the child. "I dreamed of a gray-haired man like you robbing people who were good to him." The old man shook in every joint and folded his hands like one who prays.

"Not to me," said the child, "not to me—but to Heaven, to save us from such deeds. This dream is too real. I cannot sleep, I cannot stay here, I cannot leave you here alone. We must fly. There is no time to lose. Up and away with me!"

"To-night?" murmured the old man.

"Yes, to-night," replied the child. "To-morrow night will be too late."

The old man rose from his bed, his forehead bedewed with the cold drops of fear, and bending before the child as if she had been an angel messenger sent to lead him where she would, made ready to follow her. She took him by the hand and led him on. She conducted him to her own chamber, and still holding him by the hand, as if she feared to lose him for an instant, gathered together her little things and hung her basket on her arm. Then she led him forth.

During the next two days, with only the sky above them for shelter and a penny loaf for food, they traveled many weary miles. The child grew very weak after several days and nights of hunger and exposure to cold. Although unhappy and despairing, she made no complaint, and when her strength was almost gone they met a traveler. With a ray of hope she staggered on, begging his help in a few faint words. Hearing her supplications, the traveler turned his head. The child clapped her hands together and fell senseless at his feet, for she recognized the schoolmaster of the little village.

The schoolmaster threw down his stick and book, and dropping on one knee beside her, restored her to life.

"She is quite exhausted," said he, glancing up into the old man's face. "You have taxed her powers too far, friend."

"She is perishing of want," rejoined the old man. "I never thought how weak and ill she was till now."

Casting a look upon him, half-reproachful and half-compassionate, the schoolmaster took the child in his arms, and bidding the old man gather up her little basket and follow him directly, bore her away at utmost speed to a small inn that was within sight.

The next morning she was a little better and told the schoolmaster the story of their wanderings. He heard her with astonishment and wondered to find such a great heart in a child.

When Nell was somewhat better, it was arranged that she and her grandfather should accompany the schoolmaster to a neighboring village, where he was to take charge of a new school.

They soon reached the secluded hamlet, lying in the quiet country. Nell loved the spot very dearly, but though now quite happy, she constantly grew more fragile.

Soon the whole village grew to love her. The schoolmaster read to her every day, and every night she said her prayers to her grandfather.

Nell was so very very happy; but the weary tramping and privations had been too hard for the frail child. She never recovered her strength.

Lying quietly there, looking out at the peaceful churchyard, she seemed to hear music and the sound of angels' wings. This made her feel that she was not long for earth, and she thought of death without regret, and of Heaven with joy.

Opening her eyes from a very quiet sleep, she asked that they would all kiss her once again. That done, she turned to the old man with a lovely smile upon her face—such, they said, as they had never seen, and never could forget—and clung with both her arms about his neck. At first they did not know that she was dead.

No sleep so beautiful and calm, so free from trace of pain, so fair to look upon. She seemed a creature fresh from the hand of God, waiting for the breath of life, not one who had lived and suffered death.

Tiny Tim

"GOD BLESS US, EVERY ONE," IS CRIPPLED LAD'S CHRISTMAS PLEA

From "A Christmas Carol"

IT was Christmas Day. In a poor home in London, a mother, Mrs. Cratchit, was preparing the best Christmas dinner that she could buy. She was dressed in her Sunday dress. True it had been turned and twice made over, but she had put on some bright new ribbons in honor of the great day, and she and her daughter, Belinda, were busy setting the table with all of their best dishes. Peter, her son, plunged a fork into the saucepan of potatoes, while two smaller Cratchits came tearing in screaming that outside at the bakers they had smelled the goose, and had known it for their own. And these young Cratchits danced about the table, while Peter blew the fire until the slow potatoes, bubbling up, knocked loudly at the saucepan lid to be let out and peeled.

"Whatever has got your precious father, then," said Mrs. Cratchit. "And your brother, Tiny Tim! And Martha warn't as late last Christmas Day by half an hour!"

"Here's Martha, Mother," cried the two young Cratchits. "Hurrah! There's *such* a goose, Martha!"

"Why bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are,"

said Mrs. Cratchit, kissing her a dozen times and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her with officious zeal.

"We'd a deal of work to finish up last night," replied the girl.

"Well never mind so long as you are come," said Mrs. Cratchit. "Sit down before the fire, my dear, and get warm. Lord bless ye!"

"No, no. There's Father coming," cried the two young Cratchits, who were everywhere at once. "Hide, Martha, hide."

So Martha hid herself, and in came the father, known as "Little Bob Cratchit," with at least three feet of comforter, exclusive of the fringe, hanging down before him, and his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed to look seasonable, and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Alas for Tiny Tim, he bore a little crutch and had his limbs supported by an iron frame!

"Why, where's our Martha?" cried Bob Cratchit, looking around.

"Not coming," said Mrs. Cratchit.

"Not coming!" said Bob, with a sudden declension in his high spirits, for he had been Tim's blood horse all the way from church, and had come home rampant. "Not coming upon Christmas Day!"

Martha didn't like to see him disappointed, if it were only in joke, so she came out from behind the closet door and ran into his arms, while the two young Cratchits hustled Tiny Tim, and bore him off into the wash-house that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper.

"And how did Little Tim behave?" asked Mrs. Cratchit.

"As good as gold," said Bob, "and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me coming home, that

—FROM A CHRISTMAS CAROL

On the way home, Tiny Tim told his father that he hoped the people saw him in church, because he was a cripple.

he hoped the people saw him in the church because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day who made lame beggars walk, and the blind men see."

Bob's voice was tremulous when he told them this, and it trembled more when he said that Tiny Tim was growing strong and hearty.

His active little crutch was heard upon the floor, and back came Tiny Tim before another word was spoken, escorted by his brother and sister to his stool before the fire. And while Bob, turning up his cuffs—as if, poor fellow, they were capable of being made more shabby—compounded some hot mixture in a jug, and stirred it round and round, and put it on the hob to simmer. Master Peter and the two young Cratchits went to fetch the goose, with which they soon returned in high procession. Mrs. Cratchit made the gravy; Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigor; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple sauce; Martha dusted the hot plates; Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a corner at the table; the two young Cratchits set chairs for everybody, not forgetting themselves, and mounting guard upon their posts, crammed spoons into their mouths, lest they should shriek for the goose before their turn came to be helped.

At last the dishes were set on, and grace was said. It was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs. Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving-knife, prepared to plunge it in the breast. But when she did, and when the long expected gush of stuffing issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all round the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife and feebly cried "Hurrah!"

There never was such a goose. Bob said he didn't believe there ever was such a goose cooked. Its tenderness and flavor, size and cheapness, were themes of universal admiration. Eked out by apple sauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family. Indeed, as Mrs. Cratchit said with great delight, surveying one small atom of bone upon the dish, they hadn't ate it all at last. Yet every one had enough, and the youngest Cratchits in particular were steeped in sage and onion to the eyebrows! But now, the plates being changed, Mrs. Cratchit left the room, too nervous to bear witness, to take the pudding up and bring it in.

Suppose it should not be done enough! Suppose it should break in turning out! Suppose somebody should have got over the wall of the back yard, and stolen it while they were merry with the goose, a supposition at which the two young Cratchits became livid! All sorts of horrors were supposed.

Hello! A great deal of steam and the pudding was out of the copper. In half a minute Mrs. Cratchit entered, flushed, but smiling proudly, with the pudding looking like a speckled cannon-ball, so hard and firm, blazing in ignited brandy and bedight with Christmas holly stuck into the top.

Oh! a wonderful pudding, Bob Cratchit said, and calmly, too, that he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs. Cratchit since their marriage. Mrs. Cratchit said that now the weight was off her mind, she would confess she had her doubts, about the quantity of flour. Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for so large a family. It would have been flat heresy to do so. Any Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing.

At last the dinner was all done, the cloth was cleared, the hearth swept, and the fire made up. The compound in the jug

being tasted and considered perfect, apples and oranges were put upon the table, and a shovel full of chestnuts on the fire. Then all the Cratchit family drew round the hearth, in what Bob Cratchit called a circle, meaning half a one, and at Bob Cratchit's elbow stood the family display of glass, two tumblers and a custard cup without a handle.

These held the hot stuff from the jug, however, as well as golden goblets would have done; and Bob served it out with beaming looks, while the chestnuts on the fire sputtered and cracked noisily. Then Bob proposed:

"A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!"

Which all the family reëchoed.

"God bless us every one," said Tiny Tim the last of all.

He sat very close to his father's side upon his little stool, Bob held his withered little hand in his as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him.

Looking on unseen were two creatures. One was the Spirit of Christmas, the other was Old Scrooge, the stingy, mean man for whom poor Bob Cratchit worked. On the previous evening when Bob was leaving the hard cold office, his employer had most grudgingly told him that he might stay at home on Christmas Day but that he considered it robbing him. He paid Bob as little as he could, and kept so little fire that Bob worked wrapped in his muffler, and tried to warm his frozen hands by the flame of the candle which was necessary for him to see how to put down his figures.

After Bob had left the office, a spirit visited stingy Old Scrooge, and led him back over all of the Christmases of his life, showed him just how mean he had been, and was now showing him how his poor clerk spent his Christmas with his

family, and also intended to show him the next Christmas as it would be if Scrooge remained the same mean stingy man that he had been for years.

"Spirit," said Scrooge, with an interest he had never felt before, "tell me if Tiny Tim will live."

"I see a vacant seat," replied the Ghost, "in the poor chimney corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the future, the child will die."

"No, no," said Scrooge. "Oh, no, kind Spirit! say he will be spared."

"If these shadows remain unaltered by the future another Christmas will not find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population."

Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome by penitence and grief, and cast his eyes upon the ground. But he raised them speedily on hearing his own name.

"Mr. Scrooge," said Bob. "I'll give you Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast."

"The Founder of the Feast indeed," cried Mrs. Cratchit reddening. "I wish I had him here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it."

"My dear," said Bob, "the children, Christmas Day!"

"It should be Christmas Day, I am sure," said she, "on which one drinks the health of such an odious, stingy, hard unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge. You know he is, Robert. Nobody knows it better than you do, poor fellow."

"My dear," was Bob's mild answer. "Christmas Day."

"I'll drink his health for your sake and the Day's," said Mrs. Cratchit. "Not for his." The children drank the toast

after her. It was the first of their proceedings which had no heartiness in it. Tiny Tim drank it last of all, but he didn't care twopence for it. Scrooge was the ogre of the family. The mention of his name cast a dark shadow on the party, which was not dispelled for full five minutes.

Scrooge was saddened by what the Spirit of the Christmas then present showed him, but he was distressed and horrified by what the Spirit of the future showed him. Tiny Tim was dead, he himself was dead. And while the Cratchits wept and sorrowed for their lost boy, not one human being grieved for Scrooge, but on the other hand felt a relief that he had passed out of their lives. Scrooge caught at the garment of the Ghost, begging him to tell him that he could alter the decree, if he would alter his way of life, and in his struggles he awoke and found that all that he had seen was a dream, and that the future was his own. Out he rushed and bought a turkey bigger than Tiny Tim and sent it to the Cratchits in place of the small goose that in his dream he had seen them so merry over, and he sent it without his name, so that they did not know from whom it had come.

He was at the office early next morning. If he could only be there first and catch Bob Cratchit coming late: that was the thing he had set his heart upon.

And he did it. Yes he did: The clock struck nine. No Bob. A quarter past. No Bob. He was full eighteen minutes behind his time. Scrooge sat with his door open that he might see him come into the tank.

His hat was off, before he opened the door, his comforter too. He was on his stool in a jiffy; driving away with his pen as if he were trying to overtake nine o'clock.

"Hello," growled Scrooge in his accustomed voice as near

as he could feign it. "What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?"

"I am very sorry, sir," said Bob. "I am behind my time."

"You are," repeated Scrooge. "Yes, I think you are. Step this way sir, if you please."

"It's only once a year, sir," pleaded Bob. "It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, sir."

"Now I'll tell you what, my friend," said Scrooge. "I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore," he continued, leaping from his stool, and giving Bob such a dig in the waistcoat that he staggered back into the tank again, "and therefore I am about to raise your salary."

Bob trembled, and could hardly believe his own ears.

"A Merry Christmas, Bob," said Scrooge with an earnestness that could not be mistaken, as he slapped him on the back. "A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you for many a year. I'll raise your salary, and endeavor to assist your struggling family, and we'll discuss your affairs this very afternoon over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop, Bob. Make up the fires, and buy another coal-scuttle before you dot another 'i,' Bob Cratchit."

Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father. He had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterward; and it was always said of him that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. And so, as Tiny Tim observed:

"God bless us every one!"

Pip

DEBTS OF GRATITUDE SOMETIMES REALLY BRING RICH REWARDS

From "Great Expectations"

MY father's name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, and my baby tongue being unable to make of both anything more explicit than Pip, I was called Pip by every one for short.

I never saw my father or mother, for they died when I was very young, and I was brought up by my sister, who had married Joe Gargery, the blacksmith. She was more than twenty years older than I, and had established a great reputation among the neighbors because she had brought me up "by hand."

Not understanding what the expression meant, and knowing her to have a hard and heavy hand, and to be much in the habit of laying it upon her husband as well as upon me, I supposed that Joe Gargery and I were both brought up by hand. Joe and I had a hard life with the sharp-tongued Mrs. Gargery but, being fellow-sufferers, became great chums.

Joe was a big, strong man, a gentle, good-natured, sweet-tempered, easy-going, foolish dear fellow—a sort of Hercules in strength, and also in weakness.

On a memorable raw afternoon, while standing in the churchyard beside the graves of my father and my mother, idly

moving my fingers over the letters forming their names on the headstones, I found that it was growing dark and very cold. Suddenly through my tears I saw slowly approaching a fearful man, all in coarse gray, with a great iron on his leg, a man who had been smothered in mud, lamed by stones, and torn by briars. He limped and shivered, glared and growled. His teeth chattered in his head as he seized me.

"Hold your noise!" cried a terrible voice. "Keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut your throat!"

"Oh, don't cut my throat, sir!" I pleaded in terror. "Pray don't do it, sir."

"Tell us your name!" said the man. "Quick!"

"Pip, sir."

"Show us where you live," said the man. "Point out the place!"

Frightened, I pointed in the direction of my home. The man after staring at me for a moment, turned me upside down, and emptied my pockets. He found nothing in them but a piece of bread, which he ate ravenously. Then he perched me on a high tombstone.

"Now, lookee here! Where's your mother?"

"There, sir," I answered, pointing to the grave at our feet.

The stranger, startled by my answer, was about to run, when, glancing over his shoulder, he perceived that we were surrounded only by the dead.

"Oh!" he said. "And is that your father alonger your mother?"

"Yes, sir."

"Ha!" he muttered as one considering. "Who d'ye live with?"

"My sister, sir, wife of Joe Gargery, the blacksmith."

—FROM GREAT EXPECTATIONS

The convict, desperate in his anxiety to be free of the great iron on his leg, roughly shook Pip as he exacted the pledge from the tiny chap that "a file and wittles" must be brought to him in the morning. Pip vowed to make good the promise.

"Blacksmith, eh?" And he looked down at his leg.

"Now, lookee here," he said. "You know what a file is?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you know what wittles is?"

"Yes, sir."

"You get me a file," he growled, "and you get me wittles, or I'll have your heart and liver out." He tilted me after each question in order to emphasize my helplessness and danger.

I was dreadfully frightened and so giddy that I clung to the fearful man with both hands, pleading, "If you would kindly please to let me keep upright, sir, perhaps I could attend more."

He gave me a most tremendous tilt and went on in fearful terms:

"You bring me to-morrow morning early that file and them wittles. You bring them to that old Battery over yonder. You do it, and you never dare to say a word or to make a sign concerning your ever having seen such a person as me, and you shall be let to live. You fail, or you go from my words in any partickler, and your heart and liver shall be tore out, roasted and ate. Now what do you say?"

I promised that I would get him a file and what food I could, and would come to him at the Battery early in the morning.

"Say Lord strike you dead if you don't!" said the man.

I said so and he lifted me down from the stone.

"Now, you remember what you've undertook, and get you home."

"Goo-good night, sir," I faltered.

I ran home as fast as I could. When I entered the kitchen, which was also the living room, I found Joe sitting alone.

"Mrs. Joe has been out a dozen times, looking for you,

Pip, and she's out now. And what's worse, she's got Tickler with her."

At that dismal information, I stood twisting the only button on my waistcoat, and looked in great depression at the fire. Tickler was a wax-ended piece of cane worn smooth by contact with my small frame.

"She sot down," said Joe, "and she got up, and she made a grab at Tickler, and rampaged out. That's what she did."

"Has she been long out, Joe?"

"Well," said Joe, "she's been on a rampage, this last spell about five minutes, Pip. She's a-coming! Get behind the door, old chap."

I took his advice. My sister, Mrs. Joe, came rushing in, throwing the door wide open, and finding an obstruction behind it, immediately guessed the cause, and applied Tickler to its fullest extent.

"Where have you been, you young monkey?" she asked, stamping her foot. "Tell me directly what you've been doing."

"I have only been to the churchyard," I replied, crying and rubbing myself.

"Churchyard!" repeated my sister. "If it warn't for me you'd have been to the churchyard long ago, and stayed there. Who brought you up by hand?"

"You did," said I. A heavy hand I often found it.

She applied herself to set the tea things. It was Christmas Eve, and I had to stir the pudding for the next day, from seven to eight by the Dutch clock. "Hark!" said I, having done my stirring, and warming myself before being sent up to bed; "was that guns, Joe?"

"Yes," said Joe. "Great guns. There's another convict off."

"What does that mean?" I asked.

Mrs. Joe, who always took explanations upon herself, said snappishly, "Escaped. Escaped."

"Who's escaped, and who's firing?" I asked again.

"Drat that boy," interposed my sister, frowning at me over her work. "What a questioner he is! Ask no questions, and you'll be told no lies."

It was not very polite to herself, I reflected, to imply that I should be told lies by her, even if I did ask questions. Turning from the fire, I looked up and said, "I should like to know, Mrs. Joe, if you wouldn't much mind, where the firing comes from?"

"Lord bless the boy!" exclaimed my sister. "From the Hulks."

"Hulks!" said I. "And please, what's Hulks?"

"That's the way with this boy," cried my sister. "Answer him one question, and he'll ask you a dozen directly. Hulks are prison-ships, right across the marshes."

"I wonder who's put into prison-ships, and why they're put there," I said in a general way, and with quiet desperation.

This was too much for Mrs. Joe, who immediately rose. "People are put into the Hulks because they murder and rob and do all sorts of bad, and they always begin by asking questions. I tell you what, young fellow, I didn't bring you up by hand to badger people's lives out. Now, you get along to bed!"

I was never allowed a candle, so I went upstairs in the dark, my head heavy, thinking of my sister's words and feeling fearfully sensible that the Hulks were handy for me. I was clearly on my way there. I had begun by asking questions and was going to rob Mrs. Joe. I was in mortal terror. I was afraid to sleep, for I knew that at the first faint peep of day I must rob the pantry. There was no doing it without a light.

Before dawn I got up, and crept softly down stairs, every board upon the way, and every crack in every board, calling after me, "Stop, thief!" But not a soul stirred. There was a stillness that haunted me. Slowly I opened the pantry-door, and stole bread, cheese, brandy and a pork pie. Then, taking a file from among Joe's tools, I ran for the misty marshes.

I was soon at the Battery, and there was the man, shivering with cold and limping to and fro. His eyes looked so awfully hungry. I opened my bundle and emptied my pockets. He was already handing mincemeat down his throat, and left off to take some brandy. He was shivering so violently, that it was quite as much as he could do to keep the bottle between his teeth. Hearing a faint sound, he gave a sudden start and said:

"You're not a deceiving imp? You brought no one with you?"

"No, sir! No!"

"Well," said he, "I believe you. You'd be but a fierce young hound indeed, if at your time of life you could help to hunt a wretched warmint, hunted as near death as this poor wretched warmint is."

Something clicked in his throat and he smeared his ragged rough sleeve over his eyes.

Pitying him, I remarked that I was glad he enjoyed my pie. I told him that I must go, but he took no notice. The last I saw of him, he was working hard with the file and muttering imprecations at his leg. I arrived home out of breath.

Being Christmas day we were to have a superb dinner. The expected guests arrived in due time and we all sat down. Mr. Pumblechook, Joe's uncle, said grace and ended with the very proper aspiration that we might be truly grateful. Upon this my

sister fixed her eyes on me and said in a low, reproachful voice, "Do you hear that? Be grateful."

"Especially," said Mr. Pumblechook, "be grateful, boy, to them which brought you up by hand."

"You must taste," said my sister, addressing the guests with her best grace, "you must taste, to finish with, such a delightful and delicious present of Uncle Pumblechook's, a savory pork pie."

My sister went to the pantry to get it. I felt that I could bear no more and that I must run away. I released the leg of the table and ran for my life. But as I opened the door, I ran head foremost into a party of soldiers with their muskets, one of whom held out a pair of handcuffs to me, saying, "Here you are, look sharp, come on!"

Mrs. Joe came back, empty-handed, and stopped short with the wondering lament of "Gracious goodness, gracious me, what's gone—with the—pie?"

When they entered I nearly fainted through fear, believing they had come to arrest me for stealing food from my sister and helping feed a criminal. The soldiers had come to our house in search of a blacksmith whom they wished to do some work on a pair of handcuffs. They were in search of two escaped convicts.

When the handcuffs had been mended, Joe and I accompanied the soldiers to the marshes. I was in great dread lest my convict, if we should come upon them, might suppose that it was I who had directed the soldiers there. Down banks and up banks, and over gates we went. Suddenly the sergeant shouted from a distance, "Here are both men! Surrender, you two!"

Water was splashing, and mud was flying, when more soldiers went down into the ditch to help the sergeant, and

dragged out, separately, both convicts, who were soon handcuffed.

After traveling an hour we came to a rough wooden hut in which there was a guard.

My convict never looked at me but once. Suddenly he turned to the sergeant and said,

"I wish to say something that may prevent any one laying under suspicion alonger me. I took some wittles up at the village over yonder. I stole some liquor and a pie from the blacksmith's."

"Have you missed such an article as a pie, blacksmith?" asked the sergeant.

"My wife did, at the very moment when you came in. Didn't she, Pip?"

"So," said the convict, "so you're the blacksmith, are you? Then I'm sorry to say, I've eat your pie."

"God knows you're welcome to it—so far as it was ever mine," returned Joe.

The something that I had noticed before, clicked in the man's throat, and he turned his back. The boat had returned. We saw him taken up the side and disappear. As I was growing sleepy, Joe took me on his back and carried me home.

One night, fully a year later, I was sitting in my chimney corner with my slate. Joe was slowly raking the fire and talking to me while we waited for the return of Mrs. Joe. Presently she came.

"Now," said Mrs. Joe, unwrapping herself with haste and excitement, "if this boy ain't grateful this night, he never will be!"

I looked as grateful as any boy possibly could.

"Miss Havisham wants Pip to go to her house to play."

I had known Miss Havisham to be an unusually rich and grim old lady who lived in a large, dismal house and led a life of seclusion.

"I wonder however she come to know Pip," said Joe.

The next morning I was put into clean linen of the stiffest character, and Uncle Pumblechook accompanied me.

We arrived at Miss Havisham's house, a dismal, old brick house with a great many iron bars. A pretty young girl named Estella opened to our knock, and looking at me very scornfully, carelessly directed me where I was to go. I approached the door indicated and knocked timidly. A voice from within said, "Come in!" and I entered. I found myself in a large room well lighted with wax candles. No daylight was ever allowed to penetrate Miss Havisham's house.

In an armchair sat the strangest lady I have ever seen or shall ever see. She was dressed in rich materials, satins and lace, all of white. Her shoes were white. And she had a long white veil hanging from her hair, and she had bridal flowers in her hair, but her hair was snow white. Some bright jewels sparkled on her neck and on her hands, and some other jewels lay sparkling on the table.

"Who is it?" asked the lady.

"Pip, ma'am—come to play."

"Come nearer. Let me look at you. Come close. Look at me. You are not afraid of a woman who has never seen the sun since you were born?"

"No," said I, timidly.

"Do you know what I touch here?" she said, laying her hands, one upon the other, on her left side.

"Yes, ma'am."

"What do I touch?"

"Your heart."

"Broken!" She uttered the word with an eager look. "I am tired. I want diversion. I want to see play. There, there!" with an impatient movement of her fingers, "play, play, play!"

I stood looking at Miss Havisham.

"Are you sullen and obstinate?"

"No, ma'am," I said. "I am very sorry for you, but I can't play just now. It's so new here, and so strange, and so melancholy." I stopped, fearing I might say too much.

Before she spoke again, she turned her eyes from me, and looked at the dress she wore.

"So new to him," she muttered, "so old to me; so strange to him, so familiar to me; so melancholy to both of us! Call Estella."

I called Estella, and she came.

"Let me see you play cards with this boy," said Miss Havisham to her.

"With this boy! Why, he is a common laboring-boy!"

"What do you play, boy?" asked Estella, with the greatest disdain.

"Nothing but beggar my neighbor, miss." So we sat down to cards. As Estella dealt the cards, I glanced at Miss Havisham who sat, corpse-like, looking at us.

"He calls the knaves, Jacks, this boy," said Estella. "And what coarse hands he has! And what thick boots!"

Her contempt for me was so strong that I felt ashamed. She won the game and I dealt. I misdealt, and she denounced me for a stupid, clumsy, laboring-boy.

"You say nothing of her," remarked Miss Havisham. "She says many hard things of you. What do you think of her?"

"I don't like to say," I stammered.

"Tell me in my ear," said Miss Havisham, bending down.

"I think she is very proud," I replied in a whisper.

"Anything else?"

"I think she is very pretty, and very insulting."

"Anything else?"

"I think I should like to go home."

"You shall go soon," said Miss Havisham. "Play the game out." And I played the game to an end.

"When shall I have you here again? Let me think. I know nothing of the days of the week. I know nothing of the weeks of the year. Come again after six days. Estella, take him down. Let him have something to eat, and roam about the garden. Go, Pip."

I followed the candle down, as I had followed the candle up.

Estella gave me some bread and meat and a little mug of beer, but she continued to be insulting and to treat me with great disdain. I was by nature extremely sensitive and left on the verge of tears.

When I reached home, my sister and Uncle Pumblechook were very curious to know all about Miss Havisham's. I felt convinced that if I described her home as my eyes had seen it, I should not be understood.

"Well, boy," Uncle Pumblechook began. "How did you get on with Miss Havisham? What was she a-doing?"

"She was sitting," I answered, "in a black velvet coach, and Estella—that's her niece, I think—handed her in cake and wine at the coach window, on a gold plate. And we all had cake and wine on gold plates. And I got up behind the coach to eat mine, because she told me to."

"Was anybody else there?" asked Uncle Pumblechook.

"Four dogs," said I.

"Large or small?"

"Immense," said I. "And they fought for veal cutlets out of a silver basket."

Mr. Pumblechook and Mrs. Joe stared at one another in utter amazement. I was perfectly frantic and would have told them anything.

"Where was this coach, in the name of gracious?" asked my sister.

"In Miss Havisham's room." They stared again. "But there weren't any horses to it."

"Can this be possible, uncle?" asked Mrs. Joe. "What can the boy mean?"

"I'll tell you, Mum," said Mr. Pumblechook. "My opinion is, it's a sedan-chair. She's flighty, you know—very flighty. What did you play at, boy?"

"We played with flags," I said.

"Flags!" echoed my sister.

"Yes," said I. "Estella waved a blue flag, and I waved a red one, and Miss Havisham waved one sprinkled all over with little gold stars, out at the coach window. And then we all waved our swords and hurrahed."

"Swords!" repeated my sister. "Where did you get swords from?"

"Out of a cupboard," said I. "And I saw pistols in it. And there was no daylight in the room, but it was all lighted up with candles."

If they had asked me any more questions I should undoubtedly have betrayed myself. Mr. Pumblechook left shortly, and while my sister was washing up, I stole into the forge to Joe. Then, said I, "Joe, you remember all that about Miss Havisham's?"

"Remember?" said Joe. "I believe you! Wonderful!"

"It's a terrible thing, Joe. It ain't true."

"What are you telling of, Pip?" cried Joe. "You don't mean to say it's—"

"Yes, I do; it's lies, Joe."

"But not all of it? Why, sure, you don't mean to say, Pip, that there was no black welwet coach?" For I stood shaking my head. "But at least there was dogs, Pip? Come, Pip, if there warn't no weal-cutlets, at least there was dogs?"

"No, Joe. There was nothing at all of the kind."

As I fixed my eyes hopelessly on Joe, he looked at me in shame. "Pip, old chap! This won't do, old fellow! Where do you expect to go to? What possessed you?"

And then I told Joe that I felt very miserable, and all about the beautiful young lady at Miss Havisham's, who was dreadfully proud, and that she had said I was common, and that the lies had come of it somehow.

"There's one thing you may be sure of, Pip," said Joe, "namely, that lies is lies. Howsever they come, they didn't ought to come. Don't you tell no more of 'em, Pip. That ain't the way to get out of being common, old chap."

"You are not angry with me, Joe?"

"No, Pip."

At the appointed time I returned to Miss Havisham's.

"Are you ready to play?" she asked.

I was obliged to answer negatively in some confusion.

"Since this house strikes you old and grave, boy," said Miss Havisham impatiently, "since you are unwilling to play, are you willing to work?"

I said I was quite willing. She looked in a glaring manner

all round the room, then said, leaning on me: "Come, come, come! Walk me, walk me!"

I made out from this, that the work I had to do was to walk Miss Havisham round and round the room. Accordingly, I started at once. She was not physically strong and after a little time said, "Slower," and she twitched the hand on my shoulder.

As we began to be more used to one another, Miss Havisham talked more to me, and asked me such questions as what had I learnt and what was I going to be? I told her I was going to be apprenticed to Joe.

One day some months later, she stopped short, as she and I were walking, and said,

"You are growing tall, Pip. Tell me the name again of that blacksmith of yours."

"Joe Gargery, ma'am."

"You would better be apprenticed at once. Would Gargery come here with you and arrange the matter legally, do you think?"

I signified that I had no doubt he would take it as an honor to be asked.

"Then let him come."

"At any particular time, Miss Havisham?"

"There, there! I know nothing about time. Let him come soon and come along with you."

The next day but one, Joe arrayed himself in his Sunday clothes and accompanied me to Miss Havisham's.

Miss Havisham glanced at him and took up a little bag from the table.

"Pip has earned a premium here," she said, "and here it is.

There are five-and-twenty guineas in this bag. Give it to your master, Pip."

I obeyed and Joe received it as if he were absolutely out of his mind with the wonder awakened in him.

"Good-by, Pip," she said. "Let them out, Estella."

When we stood in the daylight alone again, Joe said to me, "Astonishing, Pip! I do assure you this is as-ton-ishing."

I now fell into a regular routine of apprenticeship-life, which was varied by no more remarkable circumstance than my successive birthday visits to Miss Havisham.

One Saturday night, in the fourth year of my apprenticeship, while Joe and I were at the Three Jolly Bargemen, a strange gentleman, whom I thought I recognized, arose and came over to us.

"From information I have received," said he, looking round, "I have reason to believe there is a blacksmith among you by name Joe Gargery. Are you the man?"

"I am the man," said Joe.

"You have an apprentice, commonly known as Pip? Is this he?"

"It is!" I cried.

The stranger proved to be a gentleman whom I had once met at Miss Havisham's.

"I wish to have a private conference with you two," said he.

We three walked home, and then the strange gentleman, sitting down at the table, drew the candle to him and looked over some papers in his pocketbook. "My name," he said, "is Jaggers, and I am a lawyer and have unusual business to transact with you. I am instructed to communicate to Pip that he will come into a handsome property. Further, that it is the desire of the present possessor of that property, that he be

immediately removed from his present sphere of life and be brought up a young gentleman, with great expectations."

My wildest fancy was realized. Miss Havisham was going to make my fortune on a grand scale.

"Now, Mr. Pip," pursued the lawyer, "you are to understand, first, that it is the request of your benefactor that you always bear the name of Pip."

My heart was beating so fast and there was such a singing in my ears, that I could scarcely speak.

"First," said Mr. Jaggers, "you'll want some money." He produced a purse and counted out twenty guineas. "But what," continued Mr. Jaggers, "what if I were to make you a present, Joe Gargery, by way of compensation for the loss of Pip's services?"

Joe laid his hand upon my shoulder with the touch of a woman.

"Pip is as hearty welcome," said Joe, "to go free to honor and fortun', as no words can tell him. But if you think as money can make compensation to me for the loss of the little child, what come to the forge, and ever the best of friends—"

Oh, dear, good Joe, whom I was so ready to leave and so unthankful to, I see you again! I feel the loving tremble of your hand upon my arm again.

"Well, Mr. Pip, I think the sooner you leave here the better. Let it stand for this day week. And come straight to me."

After Mr. Jaggers left, Joe looked at me and said,

"God bless you, Pip, you're going to be a gentleman of fortun'."

The next morning I had a hurried breakfast with no taste in it. I got up from the meal, saying with a sort of briskness, as if it had only just occurred to me, "Well, I suppose I must be

off." And I kissed my sister and threw my arms around Joe's neck. Then I took up my little traveling bag and walked out.

But when I was on the coach and it was clear of the town, I deliberated with an aching heart whether I would not get down and have another evening at home.

When I arrived in London, Mr. Jaggers made suitable arrangements for me, and placed me under the care of a tutor, a relative of Miss Havisham.

For several years I studied hard, made good progress and found myself developing into quite a young gentleman. One night when reading alone in my chambers, I thought I heard footsteps on the floor below, and called out:

"Is there some one down there?"

"Yes," said a voice from the darkness beneath.

"What floor do you want?"

"The top, Mr. Pip."

"That is my name, sir. Is there anything the matter?"

"Nothing the matter," returned the voice, and the man came up the steps.

In the dim light I saw a strange face, looking up with an incomprehensible air of being touched and pleased at the sight of me. He was substantially but roughly dressed, like a voyager by sea. He had long iron-gray hair and seemed about sixty years of age. As he reached the top of the stairs, I saw with amazement that he was holding out both his hands to me. I took him into my sitting-room and asked him somewhat coldly to explain himself.

He looked about with the strangest air of wondering pleasure, as if he had some part in the things he admired.

The next moment he was again holding out both hands to me.

"What do you mean?" said I.

The man stopped and slowly rubbed his right hand over his head.

"It's disappointing to a man," he said, in a coarse, broken voice, "arter having looked for'ard and come so fur. But you're not to blame for that. I'll speak in half a minute, please."

He sat down in front of the fire, covering his forehead with his large hands. Then getting up he approached me again, grasped my hands heartily, and raised them to his lips.

"You acted noble, my boy. Noble, Pip. And I have never forgotten it."

In a second I was carried back to my childhood and again felt myself in the churchyard, in the hands of a hungry convict. That man was before me.

"Stay!" said I. "Keep off. If you are grateful to me for what I did when I was a little child, I hope you have showed your gratitude by mending your way of life. It is not necessary. But you must surely understand—" I was so disconcerted by my visitor's fixed look that the words on my tongue died away.

"What must I understand?" he asked.

"That I cannot renew that chance acquaintance of long ago. I am glad you have altered your course, but our ways are different none the less. You are wet and you look weary. Will you drink something, before you go?"

The man sank into a seat, and as I handed him a glass, I saw with amazement that his eyes were full of tears. I was touched, and sitting down, began to talk more kindly to him. His name was Magwitch, and he had grown wealthy sheep-raising in Australia. He was not naturally criminal or vicious, but had fallen into evil ways through bad associations and had been sent to prison.

Then I told him that I, too, had done well.

"May I make so bold," he said with a smile that was like a frown, and a frown that was like a smile, "to ask how you have done well since you and me was out on them lone shivering marshes?"

"Why," I stammered, "I have been chosen to succeed to some property."

"Might a mere warmint ask what property?" said he.

I faltered, "I don't know.

"Could I make a guess at your income? As to the first figure now—Five? Concerning a guardian now, there ought to have been some such-like, some lawyer, maybe. As to the first letter of that lawyer's name, now. Would it be J?"

The truth flashed on me. I could not have spoken to save my life, but stood staring wildly at the man.

"Yes, Pip, dear boy, I've made a gentleman of you. It's me wot has done it. I swore that time, sure as I ever earned a guinea, that guinea should go to you. I lived rough that you should live smooth. I worked hard that you should be above work. Lookee here, Pip, I'm your second father. You're my son—more to me than any son."

"Where will you put me, Pip?" he asked, after a long talk and full explanations. "Because, dear boy," he said, dropping his voice, "caution is necessary."

"Caution?"

"Yes, if I am found, it is death."

I carefully hid the poor old man and tried to save him from the danger occasioned by his return to England. But in spite of this, his presence in the country was discovered by an ancient enemy, also an escaped convict, and Magwitch was continually hounded and finally captured. When he was put aboard a vessel

for return, he suddenly broke away, sprang upon his accuser, and in the fight that ensued, the two of them went overboard. His enemy was killed, and Magwitch was badly hurt, but living when he was drawn up out of the water.

Faithfully I remained at his bedside and nursed him, but he grew slowly weaker.

One day as I sat beside the dying man, I said,

"Do you remember telling me about your little girl that died?"

"Yes," said the convict. "My pretty little girl! Her mother left me when I got into trouble, and took the child with her, and after a while she sent me word that my daughter was dead."

"Well," said I, "I have discovered that the child did not die. She was adopted by a rich woman and I know her well. She is a lady and very beautiful. And I love her!"

A happy expression came into the dying man's face. "My dear boy and my little girl!" With that joy on his countenance he breathed his last.

After the old convict's death, I sought and found again the proud girl, who had first incited in me the desire to become a gentleman. In her pride, humbled by many sorrows, she found in me a tower of strength and was glad to become my wife.

"She's 'Charley'"

A TRUE TO LIFE STORY OF A VERY TINY WASH-LADY

From "Bleak House"

ONE day when the post brought the news that I was to leave Miss Donny's School, I was suddenly filled with excitement and anticipation.

Oh, never, never, never shall I forget that letter, or the tenderness of Mr. Jarndyce, my dear guardian, who made my orphan way so smooth and easy.

Within a few days I found myself at Bleak House, the old home of my guardian. Mr. Jarndyce was a good man who always busied himself in a quiet way helping the worthy poor of the neighborhood. One day I accompanied him on a visit to a family of orphans who were, we had been told, in great want. Their father, a poor man whom my guardian had previously helped, had died recently.

"Neckett's children?" asked the kind-looking old woman in charge of the house in a narrow alley, in Bellyard, to which we had been directed. "Yes, surely, Miss Neckett's children. Three pair, if you please. Door right opposite the top of the stairs." She handed me a key across the counter.

As she took it for granted that I knew what to do with it, I went out without asking any more questions and led the way up the dark stairs as quietly as I could. I tapped at the door,

and a little shrill voice inside said, "We are locked in, Mrs. Blinder's got the key!"

I applied the key on hearing this, and opened the door. In a poor room with a sloping ceiling, which contained very little furniture, was a mite of a boy, some five or six years old, nursing and hushing a heavy child of eighteen months. There was no fire, though the weather was cold. Both children were wrapped in poor shawls and tippets. Their clothing was not very warm, however; their noses looked red and pinched, and their small figures appeared shrunken.

"Who has locked you up here alone?" we asked.

"Charley," said the boy, stopping and gazing at us.

"Is Charley your brother?"

"No, she's my sister Charlotte. Father called her Charley."

"Are there any more of you besides Charley?"

"Me," said the boy, "and Emma," patting the limp bonnet of the child he was nursing, "and Charley."

"Where is Charley now?"

"Out washing," said the boy, beginning to walk up and down again and at the same time trying to gaze at us. As we stood looking at one another, and at these two children, suddenly there came into the room a very little girl, childish in figure, but shrewd and with an older look in her pretty face. She was wearing a womanly sort of bonnet much too large for her, and was drying her bare arms on a womanly sort of apron. Her fingers were white and wrinkled with washing, and the soap-suds were yet smoking on her arms.

She had come running from some place in the neighborhood and, though she was very light, she was out of breath and could not speak at first. She stood panting, wiping her arms, and looking quietly at us.

—FROM BLEAK HOUSE

The baby stretched out its arms and cried to be taken by "Charley." The little girl took it, in a womanly sort of manner that matched the apron and bonnet, looking at her visitors over the burden that clung to her most affectionately.

"Oh, here's Charley!" said the boy.

The child that he was nursing stretched out its arms and cried out to be taken by Charley. The little girl took it, in a womanly sort of manner that matched the apron and the bonnet, and stood looking at us over the burden that clung to her most affectionately.

"Is it possible," whispered my guardian, as we put a chair for the little creature and got her to sit down with her load, the boy keeping close to her, holding to her apron, "is it possible that this child works for the rest? Look at this! For God's sake, look at this!—Charley, Charley! How old are you?"

"Over thirteen, sir," replied the child.

"Oh! What a great age! What a great age, Charley!" said my guardian, half playfully, yet all the more compassionately. "And do you live alone here with these babies, Charley?"

"Yes, sir, since Father died," returned the child, looking up into his face with perfect confidence.

"And how do you live, Charley?—Oh! Charley," said my guardian, turning his face away for a moment, "how do you live?"

"Since Father died, sir, I've gone out to work. I'm out washing to-day."

"God help you, Charley!" said my guardian. "You're not tall enough to reach the tub!"

"In pattens I am, sir," she said quickly. "I've got a high pair that belonged to Mother."

"And when did Mother die? Poor Mother!"

"Mother died just after Emma was born," said the child, glancing at the face that lay against her bosom. "Then Father said I was to be as good a mother to her as I could. And so I tried. And so I worked at home, and did cleaning and nursing

and washing for a long time before I began to go out. And that's how I know how."

"And do you often go out?"

"As often as I can," said Charley, opening her eyes and smiling, "because of earning sixpences and shillings."

"And do you always lock the babies up when you go out?"

"To keep 'em safe, sir, don't you see?" said Charley. "Mrs. Blinder comes up now and then, and perhaps I can run in sometimes, and they can play, you know, and Tom ain't afraid of being locked up, are you, Tom?"

"No-o!" said Tom, stoutly.

"When it comes on dark, the lamps are lighted down in the court, and they show up here quite bright. Don't they, Tom?"

"Yes, Charley," said Tom, "quite bright."

"Then he's as good as gold," said the little creature—oh! in such a motherly, womanly way! "And when Emma's tired, he puts her to bed. And when he's tired he goes to bed himself. And when I come home and light the candle and have a bit of supper, he sits up again and has it with me. Don't you Tom?"

"Oh yes, Charley!" said Tom. "That I do!" And either in this glimpse of the great pleasure of his life, or in gratitude and love for Charley, who was all in all to him, he laid his little face among the scanty folds of her frock, and passed from laughing into crying.

It was the first time since our entry that a tear had been shed among these children. The little orphan girl had spoken of their father, and of their mother, as if all that sorrow were subdued by the necessity of taking courage, and by her childish importance in being able to work, and by her bustling busy way. But now, when Tom cried, although she sat quite tranquil, looking quietly at us, and did not by any movement disturb a hair of

the head of either of her little charges, I saw two silent tears roll down her face.

I was standing at the window pretending to look out, when I found that Mrs. Blinder, from the shop below, had come in and was talking to my guardian.

"It's not much to forgive 'em the rent, sir," she said. "Who could take it from them?"

"Well, well!" said my guardian. "It is enough that the time will come when this good woman will find that it *was* much,—and that forasmuch as she did it unto the least of these! This child," he added, after a few moments, "could she possibly continue this?"

"Really, sir, I think she might," said Mrs. Blinder. "She's as handy as it's possible to be. Bless you, sir, the way she tended them two children after the mother died was the talk of the yard! And it was a wonder to see her with the father after he took ill, it really was! He said to me the very last he spoke—'Mrs. Blinder, whatever my calling may have been, I saw an Angel sitting in this room last night along with my child, and I trust her to Our Father.'"

Then my guardian had a private talk with good Mrs. Blinder, who gave him many more facts about this brave child. We kissed Charley and took her downstairs with us, and stopped to see her run away to her work. We saw her run, such a little creature in her womanly bonnet and apron, through a covered way at the bottom of the court and melt into the City's strife and sound, like a dewdrop in an ocean.

I was up in my room sometime later when I heard a soft tap at my door. I said, "Come in," and there entered a pretty little girl, neatly dressed in mourning, who dropped a curtsy.

"If you please, miss, "said the little girl, in a soft voice, "I am Charley."

"Why, so you are," said I, stooping down in astonishment and giving her a kiss. "How glad I am to see you, Charley!"

"If you please, miss," pursued Charley, in the same soft voice. "I'm your maid."

"Charley?"

"If you please, miss, I'm a present to you, with Mr. Jarndyce's love. And oh, miss," says Charley, clapping her hands, happy tears starting down her dimpled cheeks, "Tom's at school, if you please and learning so good. And little Emma, she's with Mrs. Blinder, miss, and being took such care of. And Tom, he would have been at school; and Emma, she would have been left with Mrs. Blinder; and me, I should have been here—all a deal sooner, miss, only Mr. Jarndyce thought that Tom and Emma and me had better get a little used to parting first, we was so small. Don't cry, if you please, miss."

"I can't help it, Charley."

"No, miss, nor I can't help it," says Charley. "And if you please, miss, Mr. Jarndyce's love; and he thinks you'll like to teach me now and then. And if you please, Tom and Emma and me is to see each other once a month. And I'm so happy and so thankful, miss," cried Charley, "and I'll try to be such a good maid!"

"Oh Charley dear, never forget who did all this."

"No, miss, I never shall. Nor will Tom. Nor Emma. It was all you, miss."

"I have known nothing of it. It was Mr. Jarndyce, Charley."

"Yes, miss, but it was all done for the love of you, and that you might be my mistress. If you please, miss, I am a little

present with his love. Me and Tom was to be sure to remember it."

Charley dried her eyes and entered upon her duties, going about and about the room, in her matronly little way, folding up everything she could lay her hands on. Presently Charley came creeping back to my side and said:

"Oh, don't cry, if you please, miss."

"I can't help it, Charley."

"No, miss, nor I can't help it," Charley agreed.

And, after all, I did cry for joy indeed, and so did she.

One evening I went upstairs into my room to take a peep over Charley's shoulder and see how she was getting on with her copybook. Writing was a trying business to Charley, who seemed to have no natural power over a pen. It was very odd to see what wrinkled and shriveled and tottering old lettters Charley's young hand made. Yet Charley was uncommonly expert at other things and had as nimble little fingers as I had ever watched.

"Well, Charley," said I, looking over copies of the letter *O* which were represented as square, triangular, pear-shaped, and collapsed in all kinds of ways, "we are improving. If we only get to make it round we shall be perfect, Charley."

Then I made one, and Charley made one, and the pen wouldn't join Charley's *O* neatly, but twisted it up into a knot.

"Never mind, Charley, we shall do it in time."

Charley laid down her pen, opened and shut her cramped little hand, and getting up, dropped me a curtsy.

Shortly after this the course of our happy life was greatly changed. It happened in this way:

"If you please, miss," said Charley to me one day, "do you know a poor person of the name of Jenny?"

"A brickmaker's wife, Charley? Yes."

"She came and spoke to me, when I was out a little while ago, and asked me if I wasn't the young lady's maid."

If Charley could only have made the letters in her copy as round as the eyes with which she looked into my face, they would have been excellent.

"She saw me going about, miss," Charley continued with a short laugh of delight and pride, "and she thought I looked like your maid."

"Did she really, Charley?"

"Yes, miss, really and truly." And Charley, with another short laugh of glee, made her eyes very round again, looking as serious as became my maid.

I was never tired of seeing Charley in full enjoyment of that great dignity, standing before me with her youthful face and figure and steady manner, her childish exultation breaking through it now and then in the pleasantest way.

"And where did you see her, Charley?" I inquired.

My little maid's countenance fell, for Charley still wore her black mourning frock. "By the doctor's shop, miss," she replied. "She was getting medicine for some one."

The child's face was so eager that I had no difficulty in reading her thoughts.

"Well, Charley," I said, "it appears to me that you and I can do no better than go round to Jenny's and see what's the matter."

Without saying a word to any one, we set out.

I had no thought that night—none, I am quite sure—of what was soon to happen to me. But I have always remembered since that when we had stopped at the garden gate to look up at

the sky, I had, for a moment, an indefinable impression of myself as something different from what I then was.

What did happen was enough. On our errand of mercy to these good people, both Charley and I contracted the dreadful malady that had visited the poor boy at Jenny's cottage. Charley went down first, and was very ill, but aided by the bouyancy of youth, she soon began to mend.

With me it was different. I lay ill—ill to the point of death, through several long weeks; and the usual tenor of my life became an old remembrance. But at last, slowly and flutteringly, I turned the danger point. It was a happy day for my dear little Charley when we both knew one morning, that Esther Summerson was to be again of this world. Charley's loyalty and patience and devotion during this most trying period of my life, I shall never, never forget.

In turn, Charley mastered all the lessons I set her and became an accomplished little woman. But we each taught the other a great lesson, one that was to last throughout life, a lesson that my dear guardian taught us and never failed to perform. And that lesson was that the greatest thing in all this world is LOVE.

Poor Jo, The Crossing Sweeper

THE LAD WHO NEVER FORGOT
"HE WAS VERY GOOD TO ME"
From "Bleak House"

JO—that was his only name—had no remembrance of father or mother. He was a ragged, homeless waif with barely enough clothes to cover his thin body. Jo earned his scant living by sweeping a crossing in a ruinous district of London known as Tom's-All-Alone's. There every day he cleaned away the mud and gathered a few pennies. He could neither read nor write. Just an ignorant, friendless street boy!

One cold winter night when Jo was shivering in a doorway near his crossing, a strange man turned to look at him, and after hesitating came back and spoke to him. He found that Jo had not a friend in the world.

"Neither have I. Not one!" said the stranger, who thereupon gave him the price of a supper and a night's lodging.

The man often spoke to him after that. He would ask him whether he slept soundly at night, and how he bore cold and hunger, and whether he ever wished to die, and similar strange questions. When the man had no money, he would merely say in passing, "I am as poor as you to-day, Jo." But when he had money, he never failed to give a few coins to the lad.

Poor Jo's friend died sometime later, alone and friend-

less, in a miserable lodging house in London. An inquest was held over him, the coroner trying to find out if anybody knew him and what caused his death. No one had ever seen him speak to child or grown person except to the boy Jo.

"Is that boy here?" the coroner inquired.

"No, sir, he is not here," replied the beadle.

The coroner was abrupt. "Go and fetch him."

The beadle went out to look for Jo, and soon returned, bringing the boy into the courtroom.

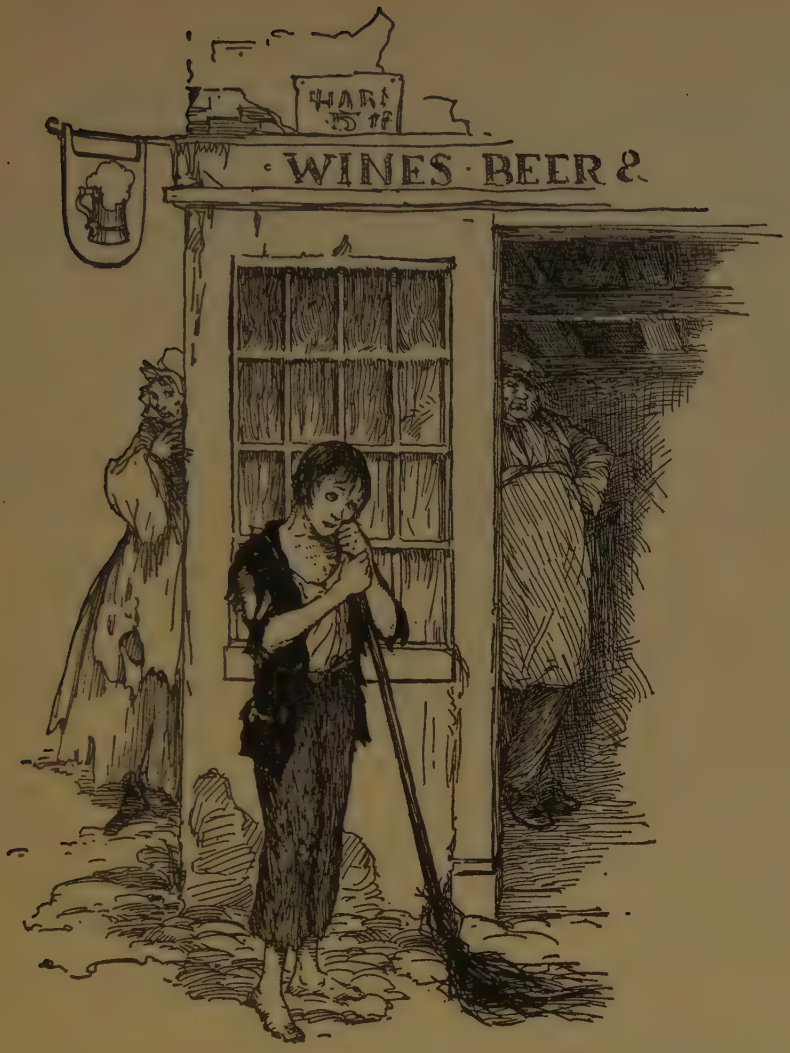
He was very muddy, very hoarse, very ragged. "Now boy! But stop a minute, caution. This boy must be put through a few preliminary paces."

Name Jo. Nothing else that he knows on. Don't know that everybody has two names. Don't know that Jo is short for a longer name. Thinks it long enough for him. Spell it? No, he can't spell it. No father, nor mother, no friends. Never been to school. What's a home? Knows a broom is a broom, and knows it's wicked to tell a lie. Don't recollect who told him about the broom, or about the lie, but knows both. Can't exactly say what'll be done to him after he's dead, if he tells a lie to the gentlemen of the court, but believes it'll be something very bad to punish him, and so he'll tell the truth.

"He wos wery good to me," the boy faltered, wiping his eyes with his wretched sleeve. "Wen I see him a-layin' so stritched out just now, I wished he could have heerd me tell him so. He wos wery good to me, he wos."

One of the gentlemen who had been listening to Jo's sad story felt a lump in his throat, and tears rise in his eyes. To comfort the poor boy, he placed a half-crown in his hand as he was leaving.

The jury was discharged after a verdict of accidental



—FROM BLEAK HOUSE

One day, as Jo was sweeping his crossing, and meditating between times, a lady approached who asked him to tell her all about the man who had befriended him. Then dropping a gold coin in his hand she silently departed.

death. The poor man was laid to rest in an obscure graveyard where only paupers await the resurrection, with Jo his only mourner.

That night a slouching figure approached the poor graveyard, and stood outside the iron gate. Holding the gate with its hands, it stood for a while looking in between the iron bars. Then with an old broom it softly swept the step and made the archway clean. It did this very busily and trimly, looked in again a little while, and then departed with tears in its eyes, whispering, "He wos wery good to me, he wos."

By his love and gratitude poor Jo made beautiful and holy the desolate potters' field where slept his only friend. Then, sad and forsaken, he crept back to his miserable kennel in Tom's-all-Alone's, where only such forlorn wretches as he find a refuge.

One day as Jo was sweeping his crossing, a lady approached him and asked him to tell her all about the man who had befriended him. He told her what he could and showed her where the man was buried. Then to Jo's great surprise, she dropped a gold piece in his hand and went away. Jo could hardly believe his eyes. His first proceeding was to hold the money to the gas light. His next was to give a one-sided bite at the edge as a test of its quality. His next to put it in his mouth for safety and to sweep the passage with great care. His job done, he set off for Tom-all-Alone's, stopping in the light of innumerable gas lamps to produce the piece of gold and give it another one-sided bite as a reassurance of its being genuine.

Although Jo was not bad, from the time of the inquest over his dead friend, when he had been summoned as a witness, the police had kept a watch on him. Finding nothing for which to accuse him, they contented themselves with forever admonishing

him to "move on." How could Jo move on? If he relinquished his crossing, he gave up his only means of earning a pittance.

Mr. Snagsby, the kind man who had given Jo a half-crown on the day of the inquest, was very much astonished one day to be called into his shop by a constable, who held the poor boy by the arm.

"Why bless my heart!" exclaimed Mr. Snagsby. "What's the matter?"

"This boy," said the constable, "although he is repeatedly told to, won't move on."

"I'm always a-moving on, sir," cried the boy, wiping away his grimy tears with his arm. "I've always been a-moving and a-moving on, ever since I was born. Where can I possibly move to, sir, more nor I do move?" And he beat his bare feet on the floor.

"Don't you come none of that or I shall make blessed short work of you!" said the constable, giving him a passionless shake. "My instructions are that you are to move on. I have told you so five hundred times."

"But where?" cried the boy.

"Well! really Constable, you know," said Mr. Snagsby wistfully, "really that does seem a question. Where, you know?"

"My instructions don't go to that," replied the constable. "My instructions are that this boy is to move on. The question is, sir, whether you know this boy. He says you do."

"I do know something of this lad," answered Mr. Snagsby. "And in what I know of him, I can't say that there is any harm. Perhaps the contrary, Constable."

"Well—" The constable paused a moment. "So far it seems he had grounds for what he said. Now I know where you live.

You live down in Toms-all-Alone's. That's a nice innocent place to live in, ain't it?"

"I can't go and live in no nicer place, sir," replied Jo. "They wouldn't have nothink to say to me if I was to go to a nice innocent place for to live. Who'ud go and let a nice innocent lodgin' to such a regular one as me?"

"You're very poor, ain't you?" asked the constable.

"Yes, I am indeed, sir, wery poor in gin'ral," replied Jo.

"I leave you judge now, sir, I shook these two half-crowns out of him." The constable held out the two silver pieces.

"They're wot's left, Mr. Sangsby," said Jo, who could never pronounce his friend's name correctly, "out of a sov'ring as wos give me by a lady."

"You don't expect anybody to believe this about the lady and the sovereign, do you?" The constable eyed him severely.

"I don't know as I do, sir," replied Jo. "I don't expect nothink at all, sir, much. But that's the true hist'ry on it."

Cautioning Jo, Mr. Snagsby turned to the officer. "Constable, I have no doubt he'll move on. You know you really must do it, Jo."

"I'm every ways agreeable, sir," says poor Jo.

"Do it then," recommended the constable. "You know what. Do it! And recollect you won't get off so easy next time. Catch hold of your money. Now the sooner you're five miles off, the better for all parties."

However, Jo was not allowed to start on his way at once. Mr. Snagsby had been called from a tea-party his wife was giving, and she and her guests, the Reverend Mr. Chadband and his wife, were interested spectators of the scene with the constable and his captive. The reverend gentleman, who loved nothing on earth so much as the sound of his own voice, saw

in Jo a most enticing subject for a long and tedious discourse, and the boy was called in for further entertainment of Mrs. Snagsby and her friends.

There Mr. Chadband hectored and harangued the poor hungry, bewildered lad to the great delight of himself and his faithful followers. After a final admonition from the minister, a penny from another guest, and some food from Mr. Snagsby, which he hugged to his breast, Jo was finally allowed to go.

Harried and beset, poor Jo left his old crossing, and moved on. Anywhere for peace!

Some time before he had done a kindness to a poor woman, the wife of a brickmaker, whose child was ill, and she had told him if ever he wanted a friend to come to her. Friendless and homeless, driven from place to place by stern officers of the law, the forlorn boy happened to think of her. She had left London and gone to St. Albans to live, and he set out on foot to find that place, thinking that if he could but get away from London, he might rest.

Almost starved, exposed to all kinds of weather, weary, worn and ill, the boy finally reached the cottage of the good woman. She took him in and did all she could for him. In a few days Jo became seriously ill.

One day he said in a hoarse tone, his gaze wandering about the room, "I'm being froze, and then burnt up, and then froze, and then burnt up, ever so many times an hour. And my head's all sleepy, and all going mad like, and I'm so dry, and my bones isn't half so much bones as pain. I'm goin' somewhere. I have been moved on and moved on. They're always a-watching, and a-driving of me, every one of them, from the time when I go to bed. And I'm a-going somewhere. I'm a-moving on to the berrying ground."

After a short relapse into sleep or stupor, he made a sudden strong effort to get out of bed.

"Stay, Jo! What now?"

"It's time for me to go to that there berrying ground."

"Lie down and tell me. What burying ground, Jo?" The kind doctor who had been called to see the sick boy was solicitous.

"Where they laid him as wos wery good to me, wery good to me indeed he wos. It's time for me to go down to that there berrying ground, sir, and ask to be put along with him. I wants to go there and be berried. He used fur to say to me, 'I'm as poor as you to-day, Jo!' I wants to tell him that I'm as poor as him now, and have come there to be laid along with him."

"By and by, Jo. By and by."

"Ah! P'raps they wouldn't do it if I was to go myself. But will you promise to have me took there, sir, and laid along with him?"

"I will indeed."

"Thank'ee, sir. Thank'ee, sir. They'll have to get the key of the gate afore they can take me in, for it's allus locked, and there's a step there, as I used fur to clean with my broom. It's turned wery dark, sir. Is there any light a-comin?"

"It's coming fast, Jo."

Fast, poor Jo's rugged road was very near its end.

"Jo, my poor fellow!"

"I hear you, sir, in the dark, but I'm a-gropin', a-gropin'. Let me catch hold of your hand."

"Jo, can you say what I say?"

"I'll say anythink as you say, sir, for I know it's good."

"Our Father."

"Our Father . . . Yes, that's wery good, sir."

"Which art in Heaven."

"Art in Heaven. Is the light a-comin', sir?"

"It's close at hand. Hallowed be Thy name."

"Hallowed be—Thy—"

The light had come upon his dark benighted way. The faint smile upon his face might have indicated that he was now hand and hand with the kind old friend who had been "allus wery good" to him.

The Two Sophies

THE STORY OF A CHEAP JACK AND A DEAF AND DUMB ORPHAN

From "Doctor Marigold"

I AM a Cheap Jack, as was my father before me. I travel about the countryside in a cart, stopping wherever I can draw a small crowd, to sell to the highest bidder my goods, useful wares, and pretty bits of jewelry.

Doctor Marigold is my name. I am not a real doctor, as one might believe. I was called Doctor out of gratitude to the kind-hearted physician, who, knowing we were poor, would accept no fee for his services. My father insisted on presenting him with a pretty tea-tray.

I often saw that tray in later years. Whenever my father's cart came into that part of the country, we used to stop at the doctor's door. The doctor was always glad to see us, and would greet us with "Aha, my brother practitioner! Come in, little M.D. How are your inclinations as to sixpence?" My inclinations were always favorable.

As the years went by, I grew into a strong, good-natured fellow and in due time married. My wife was a clever manager, and at heart a good woman, her one fault being an ungovernable temper. We had a little daughter born to us, whom I loved with all my heart. The worst of it was that in her furies the

mother frequently beat the child. I was driven to madness at sights like these and shall never forget my brave little girl, my Sophie, once saying,

"Don't you mind next time, father dear. If I don't cry out, you may know I am not much hurt. And even if I do cry out, it will only be to get mother to let go and leave off."

It was wonderful to see the child bearing pain without shedding a tear in order to spare me a heartache.

Yet in all other respects, my wife took good care of the child. Her clothes were always neat and clean. And once when our little Sophie fell ill of a fever, her mother nursed her devotedly. But the little one shrank from the touch of her mother's hand and would hide her pretty face on my shoulder, and hold me tightly round the neck.

The Cheap Jack business at that time was worse than I had ever known it. During my baby's illness, I ran out of money and was forced to bring the cart to a standstill and try to sell some of my goods.

One day I couldn't get the dear child to lie down or let go of me, and indeed I hadn't the heart to try. So I stepped out on the footboard with the child in my arms. The crowd set up a laugh when they saw us and some one shouted, "Tuppence for her!"

"Now, you country boobies," I shouted back to them, my heart aching, "I give you notice that I am going to charm the money out of your pockets. But first of all shall I tell you why I have got this little girl round my neck? You don't want to know? Then you shall. She belongs to the fairies. She's a fortune teller. She can tell me all about you in a whisper and can tell me whether you're going to buy or not. Now, do you want a saw? No, she says you don't, because you're too clumsy to use

—FROM DOCTOR MARIGOLD

"Now, you country boobies," he shouted, "my child's a fortune teller—can tell me all about you. And," he hoarsely added, "she belongs to the fairies and can tell me whether you're going to buy or not." The crowd roared its approval.

one. Now I am going to ask her what you *do* want." Then I whispered in her ear, "Your head burns so. I am afraid it hurts you bad, my pet," and she answered, without opening her heavy eyes, "Just a little, Father." Then the Cheap Jack, addressing the crowd again, said, "Oh! This little fortune teller says its a memorandum-book you want. Here it is. Look at it. To keep your accounts in. And a double-bladed penknife to scratch 'em out. And a camp stool to sit down upon while you give your mind to it. Stop! And an umbrella to keep the moon off on a pitch dark night. Now I won't ask you how much for the lot, but how little? Don't be ashamed to mention how little, because my fortune teller knows already." Then making believe to whisper, I kissed her and she kissed me. "Why, my little fortune teller says you're thinking of as little as three and threepence. I couldn't have believed it, even of you, unless she told me. Well then, I'll tell you my opinion. I so despise the threepence, that I'd sooner take three shillings. There. For three shillings, three shillings, three shillings. Gone. Hand 'em over to the lucky man."

As there had been no bid at all, everybody looked about and grinned, while I touched little Sophie's face and asked her if she felt faint or giddy. "Not very, Father. It will soon be over," she said. Then turning from the pretty patient eyes, which were opened now, and seeing nothing but grins about me, I went on in my Cheap Jack style. "Where's the butcher?" I caught sight of a fat young butcher on the outside of the crowd. "My little fairy says the good luck is the butcher's. Where is he?" Everybody pushed the blushing butcher to the front, and there was a roar, and the butcher felt himself obliged to put his hand in his pocket and take the lot. Then I sold another lot, and another, and still another, while the crowd laughed

and poked fun at each other. Suddenly I felt my child lift herself a little on my shoulder to look across the dark street. "What troubles you, my darling?"

"Nothing troubles me, Father," she answered softly. "I am not at all troubled. But don't I see a pretty churchyard over there?"

"Yes, my dear."

"Kiss me twice, dear Father, and lay me down to rest upon the churchyard grass so soft and green."

I staggered back into the cart with Sophie's head dropped on my shoulder and said to her mother, "Quick! Quick! Shut the door! Don't let those laughing people see!"

"What's the matter?" she cried.

"Oh, woman, woman! God forgive you! You'll never, never catch my little Sophie by her hair again, for she has flown away from you!"

Maybe those were harder words than I meant 'em, for the woman seemed never to forget. From that time forth, she took to brooding and would sit in the cart or walk beside it, hours at a stretch, with her arms crossed, and her eyes on the ground. For a while we went on thus, our lives growing sadder and sadder. Finally the poor mother could bear her grief no longer and I laid her away by our little Sophie in the churchyard.

Me and my dog were all the company left in the cart now. I taught the dog to give a short bark when they wouldn't bid, and to give another and a nod of his head when I asked him "Who said half-a-crown? Are you the gentleman, sir?" He also learned to growl at any person in the crowd that bid as low as sixpence.

But in time my dog got well on in years and died also

and I was left entirely alone. Being naturally of a tender turn, I had dreadfully lonely feelings after this.

While journeying along one day I came upon a Wild Beast Show, and stopping, I got to talking with a young giant who figured as a Roman in the show. During our conversation this giant confided to me that there was with the show a poor deaf and dumb girl who was very badly treated by the master. When I heard this and more from the fellow and likewise that the poor girl had beautiful long dark hair and was often pulled down by it and beaten, I couldn't see the giant through the tears that stood in my eyes.

I went at once to look for the master and in my search came upon the poor girl herself, sitting dozing against a muddy cart wheel. She was most unkempt and wretched. As I gazed at her, suddenly the thought came to me that if she were more kindly used she would not be unlike my own child. She seemed just the age my Sophie would have been at this time. I finally found the master and put it to him, "She lies heavy on your hands. What'll you take for your dumb girl?"

"A pair of braces," said he.

"Now I'll tell you," said I, "what I'm going to do with you. I'm going to fetch you half-a-dozen pair of the primest braces in the cart, and then I'll take her away with me."

"I'll believe it when I've got the goods," said the rough man.

I made all the haste I could, lest he should think twice of it, and when I returned, the bargain being completed, I led the little dumb girl to my cart.

It was happy days for both of us when Sophie and me began to travel together over the countryside. I had given her at once the name of Sophie, so that I might always feel toward

her as a father. In a very little time she was wonderfully fond of me, for she knew that I meant true and kind by her.

But oh, how hard it was at first trying to teach poor Sophie! I got some large alphabets in a box and would put the letters together to form words. When we were going to WINDSOR, I gave her those letters in that order and pointed towards the abode of royalty. Another time I gave her CART, and then chalked the same upon the cart. Another time I gave her DOCTOR MARIGOLD, and hung a corresponding inscription outside my waistcoat. People that met us stared and laughed but what did I care, so long as Sophie caught the idea? At first she made many mistakes, such as thinking me the cart, and the cart the palace. But after long patience and trouble, she began to get the idea, and then we got on swimmingly.

We had our signs too, by which to understand each other. And sometimes when she sat trying hard to think of a way to tell me something bright, she seemed to me, as I looked at her, so like my own child, that I half believed that it was my little Sophie come back, and trying to tell me where she had been to up in the skies, and what she had seen since that unhappy night when she had flown away.

The way she learned to understand any look of mine was truly surprising. When I stood outside the cart at night to sell my goods, Sophie would sit just inside and give an eager look into my eyes when I looked in and would hand me straightway the precise article I wanted. And then she would clap her hands and laugh for joy.

This happiness went on as we traveled together in the cart until she was sixteen years old. By which time I began to feel not satisfied that I was doing my whole duty by her and to consider that she ought to have better teaching than I could

give her. It drew many tears on both sides when I commenced explaining my views to her. But I told her what's right is right and all the tears can't make wrong right. So I took her by the hand and went with her one day to a deaf and dumb establishment in London.

"I am nothing but a Cheap Jack, sir," said I, to the gentleman in charge, "and this is my adopted daughter. I love her very dearly and I have saved my money to make her happy. Teach her the most that can be taught her in the shortest separation possible. I will pay well, sir, and may God bless you."

"There, there!" the kind gentleman said, putting his hand on my shoulder. "But I must first know what she has learned already. How do you communicate with her?"

Then I showed him and we began to converse together.

"This is most extraordinary," said the gentleman. "Is it possible that you have been her only teacher?"

"I have been her only teacher, sir, besides herself," said I.

"Then," said the gentleman, "you're a clever fellow, and a good fellow. Can you part with your adopted daughter for two years?"

"To do her that good,—yes, sir."

"There's another question," said he, looking toward her. "Can she part with you for two years?"

I looked at Sophie and she looked at me, and a swelling rose in my throat. But I said bravely, "I give her in your charge." And so I went back to my lonely cart.

I knew that at the school she would have good care and being young, would enjoy for the first time in her life young companions.

Though very lonely I was always happy in the thought that I was helping my little Sophie.

At last it was done, and the two years' time was gone. I went to get my Sophie. I was proud to have for her my newly finished cart, a bright cart all in yellow and red with brass fittings.

Arriving at the school, I was greeted heartily by the master.

"Doctor Marigold," said the gentleman, giving me his hand, "I am very glad to see you."

"I doubt, sir," I replied, "if you can be half as glad to see me as I am to see you."

We went in, and how pleased and proud I was when I saw again my Sophie, grown into a woman, so pretty, so intelligent, so expressive! I knew then that she must be really like my child, or I could never have known her, standing quiet by the door.

There were tears in my eyes, and the gentleman said, in a kindly manner, "You are affected."

"I feel, sir," I said, "that I am but a rough chap. Just a Cheap Jack."

"I feel," said the gentleman, "that she owes you everything. But why talk here alone? Address her in your own way."

When Sophie caught sight of me, I gave the old sign. She rushed to me and held out her arms, with tears of love and joy. She clasped me round the neck and it seemed as if there was something soft and pleasant spread over us.

Sophie departed with me and we took up again our life in the cart. I was so happy in the thought that I could keep my child with me now and looked forward to years of companionship.

But alas, I very soon discovered that my Sophie was not as happy as I. She seemed to brood at times and I finally dis-

covered her hidden secret. While in the deaf and dumb school, she had met a young man, whom in time she learned to love. This young man loved her too, and being in good circumstances, he wanted to marry her. But poor Sophie refused him saying that she could never disappoint her beloved noble father and she would stay with him though it were to break her heart.

One day while sitting with Sophie on the steps of the Library Cart, as I now called it, I said to her,

"You have been crying, my dear."

"Yes, Father."

"Why?"

"A headache."

"Not a heartache?" I asked.

"I said a headache, dear Father."

"Doctor Marigold must prescribe for that headache."

She took up the book of my Prescriptions and held it up with a forced smile, but I kept on looking earnestly at her and said,

"The prescription is not there, Sophie."

"Where is it?"

"In the heart," I answered. Then putting my arms around her, I told her that I had learned all about the young man she loved, and that I could never be happy until I knew that she was happy.

When the wedding came off, I gave Sophie away with my own hand. There were only us three and the gentleman who had had charge of her for those two years.

And so Sophie married and went to China with her young husband who had gotten an appointment there. It was a sorrowful parting, and as of old, I was once more left alone.

Sophie wrote me many letters from China. At the end of

the first year, she sent me one in an unsteady hand. "Dearest father, not a week ago I had a darling little daughter, but I am so well that they let me write these words to you. Dearest and best father, I hope my child will not be deaf and dumb, but I do not yet know."

More than five years have passed since Sophie went away. I was still the King of the Cheap Jacks and at a greater height of popularity than ever. I was spending my Christmas Day alone in the Library Cart, so I turned the lamp low and sat watching the firelight as it shone upon the backs of Sophie's books.

I was suddenly startled by the sound of steps on the cart. The handle turned and the door opened a little way, and a child peeped in. A bright, comely little girl with large dark eyes.

Looking full at me, the tiny creature took off her mite of a bonnet, and a quantity of dark curls fell all about her face. Then she opened her lips and said in a pretty voice:

"Grandfather."

"Ah, my God!" I cried out. "She can speak."

"Yes, dear Grandfather. And I am to ask you whether there was ever any one that I reminded you of?"

In a moment Sophie had her arms round my neck and her husband was wringing my hand. We were all so happy we could not speak. And when we began to get over it, and I saw the pretty child talking to them, pleased and quick and eager and busy, in the signs that I had first taught her mother, the happy and yet pitying tears fell rolling down my face.

Jemmy

THE GODSON WHO TOLD GRANNY THE BEST STORY OF ALL

From "Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings"

MRS. LIRRIPER was a gentle sweet-natured old lady who kept a quiet and exclusive lodging house in London.

Little Jemmy was born in this house. The young mother, who passed away in the arms of the kind Mrs. Lirriper, gave her baby into her keeping.

"My dear, this is sent to a childless old woman," said Mrs. Lirriper softly, with tears in her eyes. "This is for me to take care of."

Mrs. Lirriper never forgot her word; she loved little Jemmy, and brought him up as her own.

Major Jemmy Jackman, a faithful old friend of Mrs. Lirriper's, who had lodged with her for a long time, was the child's godfather. The Major loved little Jemmy no less than his godmother did, and said, "Please God, me and Mrs. Lirriper will always take good care of him."

He was christened "Jemmy" after his godfather. Never did a child bring more happiness into a house than Jemmy. He was a great comfort and joy to the Major and to his godmother, whom he always called "Gran." These three were con-

stant companions and delighted in childish games. One of their favorite pastimes was playing "coach."

The miles and miles that Mrs. Lirriper and the Major traveled in this coach with Jemmy are not to be calculated, Jemmy using the Major's brass-bound writing-desk as the coach-box, Mrs. Lirriper inside in an easy-chair and the Major up behind blowing a brown paper horn in wonderful style. Sometimes Mrs. Lirriper would take a nap in the midst of their play and would be awakened with a start by the little coachman inquiring at the window:

"Werry 'past that dwiving.—'Prightened, old lady?"

"No, no, no!" Mrs. Lirriper would say, giving the child a hug.

Then the child and the Major would go stamping about, pretending to warm their feet, and to drink glasses of ale out of paper match boxes from the chimney piece. The Major enjoyed it fully as much as the child.

One day the godparents missed little Jemmy, and when they found that he was lost they were distracted beyond words. Jemmy, who was only five years old, had strayed out at eleven o'clock in the morning and was not found until late that night. The Major rushed off to the *Times* with an advertisement giving a complete description of the lost child, pleading for the return of little Jemmy to his sorrowful godmother and godfather. The advertisement came out twenty-four hours after the boy was found.

As the day wore on, the more alarmed did Mrs. Lirriper and the Major become. They were very much annoyed by the composed ways of the police, who, though civil and obliging, were very obstinate in not entertaining the idea that the child was stolen.

—FROM THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

The next morning Mrs. Jarley's Wax Work show was presented. Nell pointed out the wax figures to the visitors and before long her innocent ways won her many friends. She was very happy but at times worried over the failing of her Grandfather's mind.

"Don't be worried, Mum," said the police sergeants who came round to comfort Mrs. Lirriper. "Don't give way to uneasiness in your mind, Mum. It'll all come right. We mostly find, Mum, as people ain't overanxious to have what I may call second-hand children, specially if they ain't well dressed. You'll get him back, Mum. And even if he'd had his best clothes on, it wouldn't come to worse than his being found wrapped up in a cabbage leaf, shivering in a lane." His words pierced her heart.

All day long Mrs. Lirriper and the Major were frantic; they ran in and out of doors. That night the Major, returning from his interview with the editor of the *Times*, rushed hysterically into Mrs. Lirriper's room. He squeezed her hand and wiped his eyes, saying, "Joy, joy!—officer in plain clothes came upon the steps as I was letting myself in—compose your feelings —Jemmy's found."

Mrs. Lirriper straightaway fainted, and, when she came to, embraced the legs of the officer, crying,

"Blessings on you, sir! Where is the darling?"

"In Kennington Station House," said the officer. "He followed the monkey."

"Oh, sir, explain to a loving grandmother what monkey," said Mrs. Lirriper, deeming this slang language.

"Mum, the child had followed an organ grinder a long way, being attracted by the monkey, and having got lost and begun to cry, a policeman took charge of him and carried him to the station."

Then the good woman understood it all and thanked the officer most heartily. She and the Major accompanied him to the police station at once, and there found the boy lying quite comfortably before a blazing fire, having played himself to sleep with a small accordion.

When Jemmy was well on in his sixth year, the Major thought it time that he should be having some instruction. He asked permission of Mrs. Lirriper to take him in hand, kindly offering to teach the boy himself. "I'm going, Madam, to make our child a calculating boy."

"Major," she replied, "you terrify me. I will be candid with you and tell you openly that if ever I find the dear child falling off in his appetite I shall know it is his calculations and shall put a stop to them at two minutes' notice."

"Well spoken, Madam," said the Major. "All I have to ask, Madam, is that you leave my godson and myself to make a week or two of preparations for surprising you, and that you give leave to have up any small articles, not actually in use, that I may require from the kitchen."

"From the kitchen, Major!" exclaimed Mrs. Lirriper, half afraid he might be going to cook her boy.

"Yes, Madam," said the major, smiling.

For several weeks the Major and Jemmy were shut up together for half an hour at a time. But as Mrs. Lirriper would always hear a great deal of laughing and talking, and hear Jemmy clapping his hands and screaming out numbers, she said to herself, "It has not harmed him yet."

At last, one day Jemmy brought her, in joke, a card in the Major's writing. "The Messrs. Jemmy and Jackman request the honor of Mrs. Lirriper's company at the Jackman Institution in the front parlor this evening at five, military time, to witness a few slight feats of elementary arithmetic."

At five, punctual to the minute, Mrs. Lirriper entered the Major's parlor. The Major stood behind the table, on which were laid a lot of things from the kitchen, tidily set out on old newspapers; and there was little Jemmy standing on a chair, his

rosy cheeks flushed and his bright eyes sparkling like diamonds.

"Now Gran," he said, "oo tit down and don't oo touch ler poople," for he saw that his dear grandmother could hardly keep from squeezing him.

"Very well, sir," said Mrs. Lirriper. "I am obedient in this good company, I am sure." And laughing heartily, she sat down in the easy-chair that was placed for her.

But picture her admiration when the Major, almost as quickly as if he were conjuring, started setting out articles, calling, "Three saucepans, an Italian iron, a hand bell, a toasting fork, a nutmeg grater, four potlids, a spice box, two egg cups, and a chopping-board. How many?"

The mite instantly cried. "Tifteen, tut down tive and carry ler toppin-board," and then clapped his hands and drew up his legs and danced on his chair.

The Major had his pupil add up every article in sight, even including Mrs. Lirriper's eyes, nose, and arms. His pride and joy as he exhibited Jemmy's ability, was without limit.

"Now," said the Major, "we come to the next elementary rule, which is called—"

"Umtraction!" cried Jemmy.

"Right," said the Major.

Then Jemmy was put successfully through a long problem in subtraction, to the Major's great delight.

"We now approach the next elementary rule, which is entitled—"

"Tickleication," cried Jemmy.

"Correct," said the Major.

After a few more examples of her boy's brilliancy, the proud grandmother could contain herself no longer.

"If you'll excuse my addressing the chair, Professor Jack-

man, I think the period of the lecture has now arrived when it becomes necessary that I should take a good hug of this young scholar."

Upon which Jemmy called out, "Gran, oo open oor arms and me'll make a 'pring into 'em."

She opened her arms to him as she had opened her sorrowful heart years ago when his poor young mother left him alone, and he jumped, and they had a good long hug together. The Major was prouder than a peacock.

But Jemmy grew and grew, bringing, as Mrs. Lirriper declared, a blessing on the house. For a while Jemmy attended day school, and being tutored at home by the Major, made good progress. But Mrs. Lirriper was quite ambitious for her boy and finally decided that it would be better to send him to a first-class boarding school, where he would meet young gentlemen of his own class.

It was a sad sight to see the Major's countenance fall when Mrs. Lirriper said, "Major, you know what I am going to say to you. Our boy must go to boarding school. Yes, Major. Life is made of partings, and we must part with our Pet."

Bravely though she spoke, she saw two Majors and half a dozen fireplaces through the tears in her eyes.

"Madam," said the Major, "he is a great boy, a boy that has not his like on the face of the earth."

"True as you say, Major; and it is not for us, merely for our own sakes, to do anything to keep him from being a credit and an ornament wherever he goes, and perhaps from rising to be a great man, is it Major? He will have all my little savings, being all in the world to me, and we must try to make him a wise man and a good man, mustn't we, Major?"

"Madam," said the Major, rising, "you are thoroughly

right. You are simply and undeniably right—and if you'll excuse me, I'll take a walk."

After the Major had gone, Mrs. Lirriper called Jemmy into her room, and putting her arms round him, spoke to him lovingly and seriously. When she had reminded the dear child that he was now in his tenth year, and that a parting would have to come soon, she was forced to stop, on seeing the sudden trembling of his lips. But he soon controlled it and said gravely,

"I understand, Gran. I knew it must be. Go on, Gran! Don't be afraid of *me*. You shall see, Gran, that I can be a man, and that I can do everything that is grateful and loving to you—and if I don't grow up to be what you would like to have me—I hope it will be because I shall die." And with that he sat down by her, and she told him about the school that she had chosen for him.

At last he said, "And now, dear Gran, let me kneel down here where I have been used to say my prayers, and let me hide my face for just a minute in your gown, and let me cry, for you have been more than father, more than mother, more than any one to me." And so he did cry, and she too, and they were both much the better for it.

Soon the Major took Jemmy to a boarding school at Lincolnshire. After the child had left the lodgings the Major fell into a continual moping state.

One evening the Major came into Mrs. Lirriper's room to take a cup of tea and to read Jemmy's newest letter, which had arrived that afternoon.

"Major," said Mrs. Lirriper, "you mustn't get into a moping way. Moping is not the way to grow younger, Major."

"My dear Madam," replied the Major, "is there *any* way of growing younger?"

"Yes; by not worrying. You know, Major, that Jemmy

will soon be home again for Christmas." At this the Major brightened.

The holidays brought Jemmy, and their first reunited Christmas day was the most delightful one that they had ever passed together.

Jemmy was never silent for five minutes, except at church time. After dinner he sat over by the fire on a stool at the Major's knee, and there, with his hot chestnuts and a dish of apples beside him on a chair, his face outshone the apples on the dish. They talked together a long while, and the Major told some Christmas stories.

Jemmy told all about school and the schoolmaster's daughter, as Mrs. Lirriper sat smoothing his curls. Then Jemmy's eyes sparkled as he asked,

"Would you like to hear a boy's story?"

"Of all things," replied Mrs. Lirriper.

"Would you, godfather?"

"Of all things," replied the Major, too.

"Well, then," said Jemmy, "I'll tell you one: There was once a boy—not me, you know—"

"No, no," replied the Major and Mrs. Lirriper.

"And he went to a school in Rutlandshire—"

"Why not Lincolnshire?" asked Mrs. Lirriper.

"Why not, you dear old Gran? Because *I* go to school in Lincolnshire, don't I?"

"Ah, to be sure," said Mrs. Lirriper. "And it's not Jemmy, you understand, Major."

"Well," the boy proceeded, hugging himself comfortably and laughing merrily, "this boy rode away to seek his fortune. And when he had grown rich, he filled his pockets one day full of gold, mounted his horse and cantered away. And he cantered

on and on till he came to a certain place where he had a certain Gran and a certain godfather—not you two, you know."

"No, no," they both cried.

"And there he was received with great rejoicing, and he filled the cupboard with gold, and he showered it out on his Gran and his godfather because they were the two kindest and dearest people that ever lived in this world. And so, while they were sitting up to their knees in gold, there was a great knocking at the street door, and in came a rich man to take all the lodgings, at double rent, forever. And so this boy and this Gran and this godfather all lived together happily, forever. And so it ended."

"And was there no quarreling?" asked Mrs. Lirriper, as Jemmy sat upon her lap and hugged her.

"No. Nobody ever quarreled."

"And did the money never melt away?"

"No! Nobody could ever spend it all."

"And did none of them ever grow older?"

"No! Nobody ever grew older after that."

"And did none of them ever die?"

"Oh, no, no, no, Gran," exclaimed the boy, laying his cheek upon Mrs. Lirriper's breast and drawing her closer to him. "Nobody ever died. Nothing good ever dies, Gran."

"Ah, Major, Major," said Mrs. Lirriper. "This beats our stories. No more stories to-night, Major. Let us end with the Boy's story, for the Boy's story is the best that has ever been told."

Gallant Jenny Wren

HAPPY IN HER WORK AS THE DOLL'S DRESSMAKER

From "Our Mutual Friend"

STITCH, stitch, stitch!

The poor little dolls' dressmaker, Jenny Wren, spent her days stitching, fashioning beautiful little gowns and hats for her "society" dolls, which were to be paraded in the big store windows.

The dolls' dressmaker had been from birth a cripple, but she was as bright and happy as if she had two good legs. Such a cheerful little face! Such laughing eyes! And such lovely golden hair! She was not beautiful, however, but no one noticed that.

Her real name was Fanny Cleaver, but she was known to her business acquaintances by the poetic name, Jenny Wren. She did not make many friends, for she was a very busy little creature and was also somewhat sensitive and shy.

Jenny lived with her father and a girl lodger, Lizzie Hexam, whom she loved very dearly. Her father, who was by nature a good, kind man, had let himself slip into bad habits. And so the poor little dolls' dressmaker had come to consider herself the head of the family, and looked upon her father as one to be protected. She ordered him about at will and usually

spoke of him playfully as "my bad boy" or "my child." In truth, he was but a child, and much trouble to Jenny.

One day Lizzie's brother, Charley, came with a friend to see his sister. He knocked at the door, which was promptly opened with a spring and a click. A parlor door within a small entry stood open.

"I can't get up," said a child within, "because my back's bad, and my legs are queer. But I'm the person of the house. What do you want, young man?"

"Hexam is my name, and I want to see my sister."

"Ah, indeed?" said the person of the house. "I thought it might be. Your sister will be in shortly. I am very fond of your sister. She's my particular friend. And this gentleman's name?"

"Mr. Headstone, my schoolmaster."

"Be seated. And would you please to shut the street door first? I can't very well do it myself, because my back's so bad, and my legs are so queer."

They complied in silence, and the little figure went on with its work of gumming or glueing together pieces of cardboard and thin wood, cut into various shapes. The scissors and knives upon the bench showed that the child herself had cut them. And the bright scraps of velvet, silk, and ribbon, also strewn upon the bench, showed that when duly stuffed they were to be smartly covered. The skill of her nimble fingers was remarkable, and as she brought two thin edges accurately together by giving them a little bite, she would glance at the visitors out of the corners of her gray eyes, with a look that was more sharp than all her other sharpness.

"You can't tell me the name of my trade, I'll be bound," she said, after taking several of these observations.

"You make pincushions," said Charley.

—FROM OUR MUTUAL FRIEND

"Ah," cried Jenny Wren, with a little scream, "I can't stand children. I know their tricks, and their manners. Always running, screeching, playing, fighting, skip-skip-skipping on the pavement and badly chalking it for their games."

"What else do I make?"

"Penwipers," said the schoolmaster.

"Ha! ha! What else do I make? You're a schoolmaster, but you can't tell me."

"You do something with straw," he said, pointing to a corner of the little bench, "but I don't know what."

"Well done—you," cried the person of the house. "I only make pincushions and penwipers, to use up my waste. But my straw really does belong to my business. Try again. What do I make with my straw?"

"Dinner mats?"

"A schoolmaster, and says dinner mats! I'll give you a clue to my trade, in a game of forfeits. I love my love with a B because she's Beautiful; I hate my love with a B because she is Brazen; I took her to the sign of the Blue Boar, and I treated her with Bonnets; her name's Bouncer, and she lives in Bedlam. Now, what do I make with my straw?"

"Ladies' bonnets?"

"Fine ladies," said the person of the house, nodding assent. "Dolls. I'm a dolls' dressmaker."

"I hope it's a good business?"

The person of the house shrugged her shoulders and shook her head. "No. Poorly paid. And I'm often so pressed for time! I had a doll married last week, and was obliged to work all night. And it's not good for me, on account of my back being so bad and my legs so queer."

They looked at the little creature with wonder, and the schoolmaster said, "I am sorry your fine ladies are so inconsiderate."

"It's the way with them," said the person of the house, shrugging her shoulders again. "And they take no care of their

clothes, and they never keep to the same fashion a month. I work for a doll with three daughters. Bless you, she's enough to ruin her husband!"

"Are you always as busy as you are now?"

"Busier. I'm slack just now. I finished a large mourning order the day before yesterday. A doll I work for lost her canary bird."

"Are you alone all day?" asked the schoolmaster. "Don't any of the neighboring children—?"

"Ah!" cried the person of the house, with a little scream, as if the word had hurt her. "Don't talk to me of children. I can't stand children. I know their tricks and their manners! Always running about and screeching, always playing and fighting, always skip-skip-skipping on the pavement and chalking it for their games! Oh, I know their tricks and their manners!" She shook the little fist. "And that's not all. Ever so often calling names in through a person's keyhole, and imitating a person's back and legs. Oh, I know their tricks and manners. And I'll tell you what I'd do, to punish 'em. There's doors under the church in the Square—black doors, leading into black vaults. Well, I'd open one of those doors, and I'd cram 'em all in, and then I'd lock the door and through the keyhole I'd blow in pepper."

"What would be the good of blowing in pepper?" asked Charley Hexam.

"To set 'em sneezing," said the person of the house, "and make their eyes water. And when they were all sneezing and their eyes inflamed, I'd mock 'em through the keyhole. Just as they, with their tricks and their manners, mock a person through a person's keyhole!"

An emphatic shake of her little fist close before her eyes seemed to ease the mind of the person of the house, for she

added, with recovered composure, "No, no, no! No children for me. Give me grown-ups."

It was difficult to guess the age of this strange creature, for her poor figure furnished no clue, and her face was at once so young and so old. Twelve, or at the most thirteen, seemed near the mark.

"I always did like grown-ups," she went on, "and always kept company with them. So sensible. Sit so quiet. Don't go prancing and capering about! And I mean always to keep among none but grown-ups till I marry. I suppose I must make up my mind to marry, one of these days."

There was a soft knock at the door. Pulling at the handle within her reach, she said, with a pleased laugh, "Now here's a grown-up that's my particular friend!" Lizzie Hexam entered the room. They all had a pleasant visit together, and when the visitors were about to leave, Lizzie walked with them a short distance.

"How came you, Lizzie," inquired the brother, "ever to get into the company of that little witch?"

"The child's father is employed by the house that employs me. That's how I came to know them. He is a weak, wretched, trembling creature, falling to pieces, never sober. The mother is dead. This poor little girl has come to be what she is, surrounded by drunken people from her cradle—if she ever had one."

The person of the house, dolls' dressmaker, and manufacturer of ornamental pincushions and penwipers, sat in her quaint little armchair, singing in the dark, until Lizzie came back.

"Well Lizzie—Mizzie—Wizzie," said she, breaking off her song, "what's the news out-of-doors?"

"What's the news indoors?" returned Lizzie playfully,

smoothing the beautiful golden hair carefully back over her shoulders.

Lizzie then lighted a candle, put the room door open, and the house door open, and turned the little low chair and its occupant towards the outer air. It was a sultry night, and this was a fine weather arrangement when the day's work was done. To complete it, she seated herself in a chair by the side of the little chair, and protectingly drew under her arm the spare hand that crept up to her.

"This is what your loving Jenny Wren calls the best time in the day and night," said the person of the house. "I have been thinking," Jenny went on, "as I sat at my work to-day, what a thing it would be if I should be able to have your company till I am married. Because then, I shall make *him* do some of the things that you do for me. But I was saying, if I should be able to have your company— Ah! what a large *if,* ain't it?"

"I have no intention of parting company with you, Jenny."

"Oh, don't say that, or you'll go directly."

"Am I so little to be relied upon?"

"You're more to be relied upon than silver and gold, dear Lizzie, but we never know what is going to happen to us. Nothing good seems to last very long. However, I won't worry about our parting until it comes, and then it will always be remembered as a sweet sorrow. But enough, let's speak of something more pleasant," said Jenny, wiping away a tear. "I wonder how it happens, Lizzie, that when I am working here all alone I smell flowers? This is not a flowering neighborhood. It's anything but that. And yet as I sit at work, I smell roses, till I think I see the rose leaves lying in heaps on the floor. I smell fallen leaves till I put down my hand—so—and expect to make them rustle. And the birds I hear.—Oh!" cried the little creature,

holding out her hand and looking upward, "how they sing! And when I was a little child," she said in a tone as though it were ages ago, "the children that I used to see early in the morning were very different from any others that I ever saw. They were not like me. They were not chilled, anxious, ragged, or beaten. They were never in pain. They were not like the children of the neighbors. They never made me tremble all over, by setting up shrill noises, and they never mocked me. Such numbers of them, too! All in white dresses, and with something shining on the borders, and on their heads, that I have never been able to imitate with my work, though I know it well. They used to come down in long bright slanting rows, and say all together, 'Who is this in pain? Who is this in pain?' When I told them who it was, they answered, 'Come and play with us!' When I said, 'I never play! I can't play!' they swept about me and took me up, and made me light. Then it was all delicious ease and rest till they laid me down, and said, all together, 'Have patience, and we will come again.' Whenever they came back, I used to know they were coming before I saw the long bright rows; I knew by hearing them ask, all together, a long way off, 'Who is this in pain? who is this in pain?' And I used to cry out, 'Oh, my blessed children, it's poor me. Have pity on me. Take me up and make me light!'—Well," said Jenny, with a long sigh, "it's Saturday night, and my child's coming home. My child is a troublesome bad child, and costs me a world of scolding. I would rather you didn't see my child, so please go upstairs."

Lizzie had hardly left when Jenny's father came stumbling into the room.

"How's my Jenny?" the father asked timidly. "How's my Jenny Wren, best of children?"

"Go along with you! Go along into your corner! Get into your corner directly!"

The wretched man made as if he would offer some remonstrance, but thinking better, went and sat down on a particular chair of disgrace.

"Oh-h-h!" cried the person of the house, pointing her little finger; "you bad old boy! O-h-h you naughty, wicked creature! What do you mean by it?"

The shaking figure put out his two hands a little way, as if making overtures of peace and begging to be let off from a scolding.

"I know your tricks and your manners," cried Miss Wren. "I know where you've been to! Oh, you disgraceful old chap! Here I slave, slave, slave, from morning to night, and all for this. What do you mean by it? Ain't you ashamed of yourself?"

"Yes, my dear," stammered the father.

"Come, come!" said the person of the house, tapping the table in a businesslike manner and shaking her head. "You know what you've got to do. Put down your money this instant."

The obedient father began to rummage in his pockets.

"Spent a fortune out of your wages, I'll be bound!" said the person of the house. "Put it here; all you've got left, every farthing! Is this all?"

"Got no more," was the rueful answer.

"Let me make sure. You know what you've got to do. Turn all your pockets inside out. Here's but seven and eightpence, halfpenny!" exclaimed Miss Wren. "Oh, you prodigal old son. Now you shall be starved."

"No, don't starve me," he urged, whimpering.

"If you were treated as you ought to be, you would be

starved. As it is, go to bed. Don't speak to me. I'm not going to forgive you. Go to bed this moment. You bad boy!"

A little while afterwards, Lizzie came down.

"Shall we have our supper, Jenny dear?"

"Ah, bless us and save us, we need have something to keep us going," returned Miss Jenny, shrugging her shoulders.

As they sat eating their supper Lizzie tried to bring her round to that prettier and better state. But the charm was broken. The dolls' dressmaker had become a little quaint shrew.

Poor dolls' dressmaker! How often so dragged down by hands that should have raised her up: how often so misdirected when losing her way on the eternal road and asking guidance! Poor, poor little dolls' dressmaker!

For her dolls' silks and velvets, Jenny was in the habit of buying scraps of goods from a kind, gentle old Jew named Riah. They became good friends, and one of his greatest pleasures was to have Jenny and Lizzie visit him. He lived in the same building in which he conducted his shop. There was a garden on the roof, far above the noise of the city, and the two girls loved to linger there. Jenny often felt, she said, as if she were dead,—"Oh, so tranquil, so peaceful, and so thankful! You could hear the people who are alive, crying and working and calling to one another down in the close streets, and you seem to pity them so." She used sometimes to call to the old man in his shop below, "Come up and be dead! Come up and be dead!"

In the course of time, circumstances compelled Lizzie to go elsewhere. Jenny missed her greatly, but in her loneliness she found much comfort with her good friend, Mr. Riah, who did all he could to cheer her.

One foggy day when he reached the doorstep of the dolls' dressmaker, who was expecting him, he could see her through

the window, by the light of her low fire, sitting, waiting for him in her bonnet. His tap at the glass roused her. She came to the door to open it, aiding her steps with a little crutch-stick.

"Good evening, godmother!" said Miss Jenny Wren.

The old man laughed and gave her his arm to lean on.

"Won't you come in and warm yourself, godmother?" she asked.

"Not if you are ready, Cinderella, my dear."

"Well!" exclaimed Miss Wren, delighted. "Now you *are* a clever old boy to take me up so quickly!" As she spoke, she removed the key of the house and put it in her pocket. She drew one hand through the old man's arm and prepared to ply her crutch-stick with the other. With that they began their plodding through the fog.

"Yes, it was truly sharp of you, godmother," resumed Miss Wren, "to understand me. But, you see, you are so like the fairy godmother in the bright little books. You look so unlike the rest of people, and so much as if you had changed yourself into that shape, just this moment, with some benevolent object. Boh!" cried Miss Jenny, putting her face close to the old man's. "I can see your features, godmother, behind the beard."

"Does the fancy go to my changing other objects too, Jenny?"

"Ah, that it does! If you'd only borrow my stick and tap this piece of pavement—it would start up a coach and six. I say! Let's believe so!"

"With all my heart," replied the good old man.

"And I'll tell you what I must ask to do, godmother. I must ask you to be so kind as to give my child a tap and change him altogether. Oh, my child has been such a bad, bad child of

late! It worries me nearly out of my wits. I have not done a stroke of work these ten days."

"What shall be changed, after that?" asked Riah in a compassionately playful voice.

"Upon my word, godmother, I am afraid I must be selfish next, and get you to set me right in the back and legs. It's a little thing to you with your power, godmother, but it's a great deal to me."

There was no querulous complaining in the words, but they were not the less touching for that.

"And then?"

"Yes, and then—you know, godmother. We'll both jump up into the coach and six and go to Lizzie. This reminds me, godmother, to ask you a serious question. You are as wise as wise can be, having been brought up by the fairies, and you can tell me this—is it better to have had a good thing and lost it, or never to have had it?"

"Explain, goddaughter."

"I feel so much more solitary and helpless without Lizzie now, than I used to feel before I knew her." Tears were in her eyes as she said so.

"Some beloved companionship fades out of most lives, my dear," said the kind man, "that of a wife, and a fair daughter, and a son of promise, has faded out of my own life—but the happiness was once there."

"Ah!" said Miss Wren thoughtfully, by no means convinced. "Then I tell you what change I think you had better begin with, godmother. You had better change *is* into *was* and *was* into *is*, and keep them so."

"Would that suit your case? Would you not be always in pain then?" asked the old man tenderly.

"Right!" exclaimed Miss Wren. "You have changed me for the wiser, godmother. Not," she added with the quaint hitch of her chin and eyes, "that you need be a very wonderful godmother to do that."

Thus conversing, and having crossed over London Bridge, they passed before a brilliantly lighted toy shop. Jenny drew her venerable friend nearer and said, pointing to the window. "Now look at 'em! All my work!"

This referred to a dazzling semicircle of dolls in all the colors of the rainbow, who were dressed for the gayest events of life.

"Pretty, pretty, pretty!" said the old man with a clap of his hands. "Most elegant taste!"

"Glad you like 'em," returned Miss Wren, loftily. "But the fun is, godmother, how I make the great ladies try my dresses on. Though it's the hardest part of my business, and would be, even if my back were not bad and my legs queer."

He looked at her as if he didn't understand what she said.

"Bless you, godmother," said Miss Wren, "I have to scud about town at all hours. If it was only sitting at my bench, cutting out and sewing, it would be comparatively easy work, but it's the trying on by the great ladies that takes it out of me."

"How, the trying on?" asked Riah.

"What a mooney godmother you are, after all!" returned Miss Wren. "Look here. There's a Drawing Room, or a grand day in the Park, or a show, or a fête, or what you like. Very well. I squeeze among the crowd, and I look about me. When I see a great lady very suitable for my business, I say 'You'll do, my dear,' and I take particular notice of her, and run home and cut her out and baste her. Then another day I come scudding back again to try on, and then I take particular notice of her

again. Sometimes she plainly seems to say, 'How that little creature is staring,' and sometimes likes it and sometimes doesn't, but all the time I am only saying to myself, 'I must hollow out a bit here, I must slope away there,' and I am making a perfect slave of her, by making her try on my doll's dress. Evening parties are severer work for me, because there's only a doorway for a full view, and what with hobbling among the wheels of the carriages and the legs of the horses, I fully expect to be run over some night. However, there I have 'em just the same. When they go bobbing into the hall from the carriage and catch a glimpse of my face poked out from behind a policeman's cape in the rain, I dare say they think I am wondering and admiring with all my eyes and heart, but they little think they're only working for my dolls. There was Lady Belinda Whitrose. I said one night when she came out of the carriage, 'You'll do, my dear,' and I ran straight home and cut her out and basted her. Back I came again, and waited behind the men that called the carriages. Very bad night too. At last, 'Lady Belinda Whitrose's carriage! Lady Belinda Whitrose coming down!' And I made her try on—oh!—and take pains about it, too—before she got seated. That's Lady Belinda hanging up by the waist, much too near the gaslight for a wax one, with her toes turned in."

When they had plodded on for some time, they arrived at a tavern, where Mr. Riah asked to see Miss Abbey Potterson, the proprietress, on a matter of business. Miss Potterson received them promptly and invited the two to come in and rest by the fire.

"My name is Riah," said the old man, with courteous action, "and this, is my young companion—"

"Stop a bit," interposed Miss Wren. "I'll give the lady my

card." She produced it from her pocket, with an air. Miss Abbey took the diminutive document, and found it to run thus—

MISS JENNY WREN,

Dolls' Dressmaker.

Dolls attended at their own residence.

"Lud!" exclaimed Miss Potterson, staring. And dropped the card. She was greatly amused and interested in the child, and asked, "Did you ever taste shrub, child?"

Miss Wren shook her head.

"Should you like to?"

"Should if it's good," returned Miss Wren.

"You shall try. Put your poor little feet on the fender. It's a cold, cold night and the fog clings so. Why! what lovely hair!" cried Miss Abbey. "And enough to make wigs for all the dolls in the world. What a quantity!"

"Do you call that a quantity?" returned Miss Wren. "Poof! What do you say to the rest of it?" As she spoke she untied a band, and the golden stream fell over herself and over the chair, and flowed down to the ground. Miss Abbey's admiration seemed to increase her perplexity. She beckoned the old man towards her and whispered,

"Child, or woman?"

"Child in years," was the answer, "woman in self-reliance and trial."

"You are talking about me, good people," thought Miss

Jenny, sitting in her golden bower, warming her feet. "I can't hear what you say, but I know your tricks and your manners!" She sipped the shrub leisurely, while Riah and Miss Abbey talked.

A short time later, there was an eventful change in the old man's life. His employer, a money lender, and a monster without conscience, was accustomed to grind down his victims mercilessly. The gentle Riah, having reached the point where he could stand it no longer, finally broke with this hard-hearted man. Thus the old man was forced to leave the little lodgings that had become dear to him, and Jenny at once begged her good friend to come and live with her father and herself.

He gladly accepted; and the singularly assorted couple now often went through the streets together.

Upon leaving the house one day, Jenny had charged her "child" to remain at home. But no sooner had she gone than he went out. Being weak from illness and in a quarrelsome mood, he got into a street row and was taken by the police who, finding him unmanageable, strapped him to a stretcher, to take him to some place of detention. Weak and ill, this rough treatment soon quenched the life spark which fluttered in his wornout body.

Jenny and her companion happened to meet the cavalcade coming up the street, and, full of curiosity, the child hastened to see what it was about. When she saw her wretched father, she was wild. She beat her hands together and cried, "Oh, gentlemen, gentlemen! He belongs to me!"

"Belongs to you?" said the head of the party.

"Oh, yes, dear gentlemen; he's my child, out without leave. My poor bad, bad boy. And he doesn't know me, he doesn't know me! Oh, what shall I do?" cried the little creature, wildly, "When my own child doesn't know me!"

The head of the party looked at the old man for an explantion. He whispered, as the dolls' dressmaker bent over the exhausted form and vainly tried to extract some sign of recognition.

"It's her drunken father."

The police covered the still figure, which was borne along through the streets, the people falling away. Behind it went the dolls' dressmaker, hiding her face in the Jewish skirts with one hand while with the other she plied her crutch-stick.

Many flaunting dolls had to be gayly dressed before the poor little dressmaker had the money to buy mourning for her child. As she worked, old Mr. Riah sat beside her, helping in such small ways as he could.

"If my poor boy had been brought up better, he might have done better," she said. "Not that I have anything to reproach myself with. I hope I have no cause for that."

"None indeed, Jenny, I am very certain."

"Thank you, godmother. It cheers me to hear you say so. But you see it is so hard to bring up a child well, when you work, work, work, all day. When he was out of employment, I couldn't always keep him near me. He got fractious and nervous, and I was obliged to let him go into the streets, and he never did well in the streets. He was very, very ill, sometimes. And I called him names. If I had been patient, I should never have called him names. I felt so much my responsibility as a mother. I tried reasoning, and reasoning failed. I tried coaxing, and coaxing failed. I tried scolding, and scolding failed. But I was bound to try everything, you know. Where would have been my duty to my poor lost boy if I had not tried everything?"

"Cinderella, dear Cinderella, you are a good, noble little

girl," said the old man; "and with God's help I will always take care of you."

"I always thought that you belonged to the fairies, dear godmother, and now I know it," smiled poor Jenny through her tears. And the little needle went,

stitch, stitch, stitch.

The Beautiful Star

A GUIDE WHICH GLEAMED AN ETERNAL MESSAGE OF HOPE

From "A Child's Dream of A Star"

THERE was once a child, and he strolled about a good deal, and thought of a number of things. He had a sister, who was a child too, his constant companion. These two used to wonder all day long. They wondered at the beauty of the flowers; they wondered at the height and blueness of the sky; they wondered at the depth of the bright water; they wondered at the goodness and the power of God who made the lovely world.

They used to say to one another, sometimes—supposing all the children upon earth were to die, would the flowers, and the water, and the sky be sorry? They believed they would be. For, said they, the buds are the children of the flowers, and the little playful streams that gambol down the hillsides are the children of the water, and the smallest bright specks, playing at hide and seek in the sky all night, must surely be the children of the stars; and they would all grieve to see their playmates, the children of men, no more.

There was one clear, shining star that used to come out in the sky before the others, near the church spire, above the

graves. It was larger and more beautiful, they thought, than all of the others; and every night they watched for it, standing hand in hand at a window. Whoever saw it first cried out, "I see the star!" And often they cried out both together, knowing so well when it would rise, and where. So they grew to be such friends with it that before lying down in their beds they always looked out once again, to bid it good-night; and when they were turning round to sleep, they used to say, "God bless the star."

But while she was still very young—very, very young—the sister drooped and came to be so weak that she could no longer stand by the window at night; and then the child looked sadly out by himself, and, when he saw the star, turned round and said to the patient pale face on the bed, "I see the star."

And so the time came, all too soon, when the child looked out alone, and when there was no face on the bed; and when there was a little grave among the graves, not there before; and when the star made long rays down towards him, as he saw it through his tears.

Now these rays were so bright, and they seemed to make such a shining way from earth to Heaven, that when the child went to his solitary bed he dreamed about the star, and dreamed that, lying where he was, he saw a train of people taken up that sparkling road by angels. And the star, opening, showed him a great world of light, where many more such angels waited to receive them.

All these angels, who were waiting, turned their beaming eyes upon the people who were carried up into the star; and some came out from the long rows in which they stood, and fell upon the people's necks, and kissed them tenderly, and went

—FROM A CHILD'S DREAM OF A STAR

There was one clear, shining star that used to come out in the sky before the others, near the tall church spire. It was larger and more beautiful, they thought, than all of the others, and every night they watched for it, standing hand in hand at the open window.

away with them down avenues of light, and were so happy in their company that, lying in his bed, he wept for joy.

But there were many angels who did not go with them, and among them was one whom he knew. The patient face that once had lain upon the bed was glorified and radiant, but his heart found out his sister among all the host.

His sister's angel lingered near the entrance of the star and said to the leader among those who had brought the people thither:

"Is my brother come?"

And he said, "No."

She was turning hopefully away when the child stretched out his arms, and cried, "Oh, sister, I am here! Take me!" Then she turned her beaming eyes upon him. It was night, and the star was shining in the room, making long rays down towards him as he saw it through his tears.

From that hour forth, the child looked out upon the star as on the home he was to go to when his time should come; and he thought that he did not belong to the earth alone, but to the star too, because of his sister's angel gone before.

There was a baby born to be a brother to the child; and while he was so little that he never yet had spoken a word, he stretched his tiny form out on his bed and died.

Again the child dreamed of the open star, and of the company of angels, and of the train of people, and of the rows of angels with beaming eyes all turned upon those people's faces.

Said his sister's angel to the leader: "Is my brother come?"

And he said, "Not that one, but another."

As the child beheld his brother's angel in her arms, he cried, "Oh, sister, I am here! Take me!" She turned and smiled upon him, and the star was shining.

He grew to be a young man, and was busy at his books when an old servant came to him and said, "Thy mother is no more. I bring her blessings to her darling son!"

Again at night he saw the star and all that former company. Said his sister's angel to the leader:

"Is my brother come?"

And he said, "Thy mother!"

A mighty cry of joy went forth through all the stars, because the mother was reunited with her two children. And he stretched out his arms and cried, "Oh, mother, sister, brother, I am here! Take me!" And they answered him, "Not yet"; and the star was shining.

He grew to be a man whose hair was turning gray. He was sitting in his chair by his fireside, heavy with grief, his face bedewed with tears, when the star opened once again.

Said his sister's angel to the leader: "Is my brother come?"

And he said, "Nay, but his maiden daughter."

And the man who had been the child saw his daughter, newly lost to him, a celestial creature among those three; and he said, "My daughter's head is on my sister's bosom, and her arm is around my mother's neck, and at her feet there is a baby of old time, and I can bear the parting from her, God be praised!"

And the star was shining.

Thus the child came to be an old man, and his once smooth face was wrinkled, and his steps were slow and feeble, and his back was bent. And one night as he lay upon his bed, his children standing round, he cried, as he had cried so long ago:

"I see the star!"

They whispered to one another, "He is dying."

And he said, "I am. My age is falling from me like a garment and I move towards the star as a child. And O, my Father, now I thank thee that it has so often opened to receive those dear ones who await me."

And the star was shining; and it shines upon his grave.

Lucy of the "Golden Mary"

THE TWO PLAYFELLOWS WHO WERE ROCKED IN THE CRADLE OF THE SEA

From "The Wreck of the Golden Mary"

I WAS apprenticed to the sea, when I was twelve years old, and had a varied and venturesome career.

On my return to England from the West Indies, at the age of fifty-six, I first became interested in the rumor that gold had been discovered in California.

One day I happened to meet an old friend of mine, a seafaring man like myself, with a California nugget hanging from his watch chain.

"My dear Captain Ravender," he greeted me heartily, "of all the men on earth, I wanted most to see you."

"Well," said I, "that looks as if you *were* to see me, don't it?"

He had much to say to me. He had a scheme for chartering a new ship to take out cargo to the diggers and emigrants in California, and to buy and bring back gold. I gave him my views of his plan, and he very much approved of them.

"Well, well," said he, "come down to Liverpool to-morrow with me and see the *Golden Mary*."

The next morning we went on board the *Golden Mary*. I declare her to have been the most complete and most exquisite

beauty that ever I set my eyes on. When we had inspected every timber in her, I put out my hand to my friend.

"Touch upon it," said I, "and touch heartily. I take command of this ship."

We had room for twenty passengers. Among them I particularly took notice of a bright-eyed, blooming young wife who was going to join her husband in California, taking with her an only child, a little girl of three, whom he had never seen. The child was a most engaging little creature and soon became a favorite with every one on board. The person whom the little girl loved best, after her mother, was the young first mate, John Steadman. It was a beautiful sight to watch her and John Steadman playing bo-peep around the mast.

The child had a quantity of clustering golden curls, so that John Steadman named her the *Golden Lucy* and used to pretend that the *Golden Mary* was her sister and was alive. She would sit for hours on the deck and dress up the ship as though it was a doll. Never had a child such a doll before.

She used to tie ribbons and little bits of finery here and there, and nobody ever touched them, unless it was to save them from being blown away.

There was another passenger on board, an old gentleman, who was always talking about the great gold discovery in California. Whether he was making the voyage thinking that his old arms could dig for gold, trade for it, or cheat for it, no one knew. It was his secret, and he kept it. He was a peculiar old man, not one you would have thought to be fond of children, but he was always worrying lest Lucy should fall overboard or down a hatchway, or should get hurt in some other way. What made it seem more strange was the fact that she did not like him and would not go to him without being coaxed by others.

—FROM THE WRECK OF THE GOLDEN MARY

The person whom the little girl loved best, after her mother, was the first mate. The child had a quantity of golden curls, so he named her the Golden Lucy. It was a beautiful sight to see the two playing Bo-Peep around the mast as the ship plowed the seas.

John Steadman said more than once that if the *Golden Mary* felt any tenderness to the dear old gentleman she carried, she must be bitterly jealous of the *Golden Lucy*.

The first sixty days out, we had very good weather, but after that we came across an unusual quantity of ice, and the nights grew very dark.

One day the mother, who was standing beside me on deck, looking over the sea, said,

"Oh, Captain Ravender, it looks as if the whole solid earth had changed into ice and broken up."

"I don't wonder that it does to your inexperienced eyes, my dear," I replied. But really I was only trying to reassure her, for I myself was becoming uneasy about the ice and the very dark nights.

I thought it best to double the watch.

For eight nights I myself watched on deck and took very little sleep by day, and was becoming so thoroughly exhausted that John Steadman, my faithful first mate, finally came to me and said,

"Now, Captain Ravender, I entreat you to go below; I am sure you can hardly stand, and your voice is getting weaker, sir. Go below and take a little rest."

Very unwillingly I consented to this, making John Steadman promise to call me in three hours' time if I did not wake of my own accord.

I turned in, as we sailors say, all standing. That is, I did not pull my clothes off—no, not even my coat—only my shoes, since my feet were badly swelled. There was a little swinging lamp alight in my cabin. I thought, as I looked at it before shutting my eyes, that I was so weary of the intense darkness over the sea that I could rest better if I did not put out the light.

I fell asleep and began to dream at once. I dreamed that I was back in Penrith again, and was trying to get round the church, which had altered its shape very much since I last saw it, and was cloven all down the middle of the steeple in a most singular manner. Why I wanted to get round the church, I don't know; but I was as anxious to do it as if my life depended on it. I was still trying when I came against it with a violent shock, and was flung out of my bunk against the ship's side. Shrieks and a terrific outcry struck me far harder than the breaking timbers; and amidst sounds of grinding and crashing, and a heavy rushing and breaking of water—sounds I understood too well—I hurriedly made my way on deck.

I had my speaking trumpet in my hand and made myself heard above the terrifying noise. I hailed first John Steadman, my first mate, and then my second mate, then my crew. I ordered the lights to be burned. In a moment the lights shone up so high that I could see the immense iceberg which we had struck, cloven at the top and down the middle exactly like Penrith Church in my dream.

I could see that there was no hope of saving the *Golden Mary*. She was rapidly filling with water, and nothing could save her from going down.

"Lower the lifeboats," I shouted.

There were but two boats, the long-boat and the surf-boat. I now whispered to John Steadman, "John, I stand at the gangway here, to see every soul on board safe over the side. You shall have the next post of honor, and shall be the last but one to leave the ship. You shall have charge of the surf-boat. Bring up the passengers and range them behind me, and put what provisions and water you can get in the boats."

The men got the boats out in good order and, as the passen-

gers were leaving, the mother of little Lucy turned to me and said,

"Kiss me, Captain Ravender, and God in heaven bless you; you're a good, noble man."

"My dear," said I, "those words are better for me than a lifeboat."

I held little Lucy in my arms till the mother was safely in the boat, kissing the child again and again. At length I handed her down gently.

When the passengers and crew were all safe in the boats, some of the men called out,

"Captain Ravender, if anything goes wrong with us and you are saved, remember we stood by you!"

"We'll all stand by one another ashore yet, please God, my lads," said I. "Hold on bravely, and be tender with the women."

I was the last to leave the sinking ship. I then took command of the longboat.

In this boat were the young mother, the *Golden Lucy,* and the old gentleman; for the latter had begged not to be parted from the child. He entertained a superstition that if the child perished he would also.

As soon as morning dawned, I overhauled our provisions and divided them fairly between the two boats, and then bade John Steadman, if possible, to keep within sight of the longboat. The two crews cheered each other heartily, and then fell to the oars.

There were many rough men amongst the crew, but they softened wonderfully and showed the greatest kindness and consideration for the women and the little child. Their suffering from cold and wet was greater than from hunger, although the

food supply was quite limited. Somehow they managed to keep the child warm, though every one else shivered so that the chattering of teeth was sad to hear.

The *Golden Lucy* at first cried, weeping wildly for her lost playmate, the *Golden Mary*. Between her little sobs she would cry out, "Oh the dear *Golden Mary!* Oh look at her! Save her! Save the poor *Golden Mary!*" But soon afterwards she scarcely shed a tear.

I tried to cheer every one as much as possible, and spoke out saying, "Let every one here thank the Lord for our preservation!" And all the voices answered (even the child's), "We thank the Lord." I then said the Lord's Prayer, and all hands said it after me, in a solemn murmuring.

When the weather made it possible, the *Golden Lucy* was held up now and again in the arms of one of the sailors to look over the sea for John Steadman's boat, and with her flowing golden hair and innocent face, she looked like a little angel that was about to fly away.

Every night, as regularly as night came on, the mother sang little Lucy to sleep with the Evening Hymn, and all would join in and would take up the last lines and sing them very softly after her.

Twelve nights and eleven days we had been in the boat when the old man began to be delirious and cry out to me to throw the gold overboard or we all would be lost.

For many days the little *Golden Lucy* had been gradually declining, and that was the cause for the old man's wildness. He was quite sure that if the child died all would be lost, and he shrieked out over and over again to give her all the remaining food. Only keep her alive!

I feared that the dying child would be frightened at his cries, and bade him be silent.

She lay in her mother's arms at my feet. One of her little hands was almost always creeping about her mother's neck and chin, until at last the little golden head ceased to move. She opened her weary eyes to look at her mother for the last time, then gently closed them again with a peaceful smile, and the little soul took flight.

It troubled me all night to think that there was no Prayer Book among us for the burial service in the morning, but remembering a few words, I stood up and said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord. He loved little children, saying: 'Suffer them to come unto Me and rebuke them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' " With these words I laid my rough face softly on the forehead of the child and kissed it an everlasting farewell, and then buried the *Golden Lucy* in the grave of the *Golden Mary*.

Never more would the *Golden Lucy* gaze out over the water to wave welcome to our comrades.

It used to be a great comfort to the men in the surfboat, to see the *Golden Lucy* held up by one of the men in the longboat, when the weather allowed it, as the best and brightest sight that could be seen. She appeared in the distance almost like a little white bird in the air. Sorrowfully they looked in vain, day after day, and at last learned the sad truth—that the *Golden Lucy* was buried in the grave of the *Golden Mary*.

After many more days of suffering, the boats were picked up by a passing vessel, and, more dead than alive, we were taken aboard and cared for. But never as long as we live shall any of us ever forget the terrible experience through which we passed, nor the two golden playfellows who lay sleeping side by side in the cradle of the mighty deep blue sea.

THE END